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Table of contents

Foreword	3
Acknowledgement	4
Introduction	5
Pre-Electoral Coalitions and the Political Economy of Democratic Consolidation in Multi-Ethnic Societies: Some Critical Reflections for The Democratic Alliance (TDA).....	9
Conflict and State Formation in South Sudan: The Logic of Oil Revenues in Influencing the Dynamics of Elite Bargains	30
The crossover: Exploring the party identification paradox in Uganda’s multiparty politics	41
Youth Participation in Political Processes in Uganda: Exploring Opportunities and Constraints	55
Strategies for Effective Youth Engagement in Uganda’s Political System	62

Foreword

By now, we have all come to accept the reality that scientific analysis of African democracy and development originates from everywhere else but the continent itself. Regardless of whether one explored literature that appear on the reading lists of western or African Universities, it is seldom the case that contributions from African scholarship will be featured. Research and anecdotal conversations have largely attributed this challenge to dismal research output from Africa, which also resulted from the precipitous decline in higher education and research funding in the wake of the 1990s structural adjustment policies.

This situation, however, does not have to be accepted as the insurmountable norm. There is urgent need to recognise the intensity of development focus on Africa as well as the diverse indigenous efforts to address the continent's challenges, which can strongly profit from analytical perspectives of a budding pool of African researchers and scholars.

In view of the above, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) applauds the initiative by our long-term partner – the University Forum on Governance (UNIFOG) – in introducing the *Journal on Perspectives of African Democracy and Development*. Indeed, it would be naïve to view this initiative as the panacea to Uganda's or Africa's research gaps. However, the idea of a journal by analysts who have lived and worked in Africa portends the provision of a more nuanced explanation of African development trajectories from the lens of African scholars. Moreover, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung views the focus on democracy in this journal as putting the focus on the most critical issue as we view democratic consolidation as the only sustainable way to promote development.

I would like to congratulate the University Forum on Governance for realising the maiden version of the journal. As partners, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung is proud to have supported the delivery of this project, which I am confident stands to provide high value to scholars, development actors, and policy-makers within Africa and beyond.

I have personally interacted with the contributors to this first edition and have come to admire their passion for African development as well as their ability to offer a balanced analysis of issues. I see this as a nascent task with the potential to grow and influence global thinking about Africa. I would like to invite stakeholders with an interest in African democracy to take some time and consult this journal; in here is potentially something new that you could learn.

Mathias Kamp
Country Representative
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Acknowledgement

The University Forum on Governance would like to express its deepest gratitude to the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung for the financial and technical support towards the development and production of this maiden *Journal on Perspectives of African Democracy and Development* and for the long-term partnership in fostering democratic consolidation in Uganda.

We would also like to thank the individuals who made outstanding contribution to this issue, particularly Mr. Michael Mugisha for the authorship of some articles, as well as conceptualisation and coordination of tasks diligently performed. Special mention goes to other contributors of different papers in this issue: Mr. Bruce Kabaasa, Mr. Donnas Ojok, Mr. Mathias Kamp, Ms. Nele Krugger and Mr. Yusuf Kiranda. Your interest in analysing African development has been confirmed with the unrelenting dedication you put into this work, which you had to deliver under very tight deadlines.

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Introduction

With the third wave of democratisation ushered in by the end of the Cold War in the 1990s, and the subsequent declaration of the 'end of history' by Francis Fukuyuma, studies on democracy and development across the globe have attracted intellectual inquiry. No less important has been the focus on the African continent. Leading scholars on this issue, such as Van der Walle, have led impressive studies focusing mainly on the analysis of the dynamics of the democratic trajectory in West African countries, mainly in states like Mali, Senegal and Ivory Coast, and subsequently producing impressive texts that have shaped debates on cultivating and supporting democratic governance in difficult places. However, impressive and deductively enlightening as this trend has been, little contribution to this scholarship has emerged from African scholars. In fact, Professor Mkandawire, the distinguished African Development Professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science, illuminates the severity of the problem in his inaugural lecture to the Chair of African Development by highlighting that 'research in Africa produces about 27,000 papers per year, which is the same volume of published output as the Netherlands.' This decline in African scholarship has had deleterious consequences for the intellectual, institutional and developmental trajectory of the continent. Mkandawire emphasises in another publication that ideas matter for development; and ideas are

a product of research.¹ The decline in research and, by implication, ideas from African scholars had been most poignantly felt in the usurpation of policy space in the era of structural adjustment when the World Bank and other international financial institutions (IFIs) crowded out African governments in the formulation of policies and programmes to structure Africa's development.

Research, policy discussion and debate on African development has for the past two decades been mainly a province of western scholars, working for either the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the international development organisations. The voices of African scholars have featured less in the policy discourse on the African development.

However, this trend is a complete contrast to the situation in the immediate post-independence Africa. *In Our Continent, Our Future*, Mkandawire and Soludo (1999) intimate that many African governments saw universities as a critical pillar of Africa's development. This was most clearly reflected by the level of funding and the close relationships that political actors had with university academics and leadership, the latter often being directly involved in supporting the debate, design and framing of national ideologies, development policies and their

¹ Mkandawire, T. (2011). Running while others walk: Knowledge and the challenge of Africa's development. *Africa Development*, 36(2), 1-36.

implementation. However, as many post-independence governments were replaced with military dictatorships, mainly in the 1970s and 1980s, university academics were seen as enemies of the state, mainly as critics of government policies. Funding to African universities had a more remarkable reduction in the wake of structural adjustment policies, reinforced by a publication by World Bank experts, which indicated that investment in primary education promised greater returns to economic growth than tertiary education.² This statistical absurdity was further buttressed by a perception that tertiary education was largely 'elitist' and urban-biased, and given the level of development at which most African countries were, it was seen as prudent, economically and empirically sensible to shift funding more to primary education rather than tertiary education.

This new policy direction had long-lasting consequences for the level and nature of scholarship from African universities. Mamdani, in his vitriolic text, *Scholars in the Marketplace*, has argued that the shift in funding away from tertiary education to primary education particularly resulted in a decline in funding for research to various university departments, leaving many university departments with no funding for supporting research activities of various academic staff and the training of more researchers. The reduction in funding had two main effects: first, it resulted in an exodus of experienced African scholars out of the continent to universities elsewhere in the world in search of places that would aid their

professional growth. Second, many academic staff of the subsequent period mainly became local consultants for the burgeoning Non-Government Organisations (NGO) sector that had attracted a lot of donor funding that targeted the creation of a vibrant civil society to catalyse Africa's evolving democracies. The combined effect of all this has been a significant reduction in the quality and quantity of researchers at various African universities, which ultimately has seriously affected the quality and quantity of scholarship.

Consequently, the intellectual conversations on the scope of issues on African development have been shaped by every other intellectual in the world but Africans. And the deleterious undoing of this precedent has begun to be felt, particularly in the wake of the global financial crisis that has recently shaken the world. This has posed a number of threats to the sustainability of the modicum of gains that had been achieved in fostering democracy and good governance, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa where the supporting infrastructure for inclusive, stable and sustainable democratic governance is still weak, if not absent in some places. Perhaps it is key to note here that development organisations, including the World Bank, have increasingly recognised that effective policy implementation will require a critical mass of Africans at the ideation level as well as at all levels of development policy efficacy. This has spurred an intellectual paradigm shift towards supporting African scholars to be at the helm of shaping the debate on development problems and prescriptive solutions to their societies. The current programme for African leadership (Pfal) at the

² See Mkandawire, T. (2014). Can Africa Turn from Recovery to Development?. *Current History*, 113(763), 171-177.

London School of Economics and Political Science, for example, can be viewed as part of the larger initiative to resuscitate the need to empower young African leaders with the wherewithal to effectively participate in and structure the processes shaping their destiny.

In the same spirit, KAS's cooperation with the University Forum on Governance and its support to the launch the publication of the *Journal on Perspectives of African Democracy and Development* is driven by the objective of rebuilding and empowering a critical mass of African scholars not only to be at the forefront of shaping the discourses that are central to their national development, particularly, but also to contribute to the global discourses on democracy and development generally. This will be made possible by undertaking evidence-based analysis of experiences specific to their countries and framing debates in a scientific fashion with a view to generating nuances to the debate on democracy and development as well as identifying key areas of intervention that would gradually legitimise democratic governance as the best approach to development.

No less important are the topical issues addressed by scholars in the debut issue of this journal. Some of the ideas that provoked the writing and contribution of articles in this journal emerged from public dialogues supported by KAS in cooperation with UNIFOG. The public dialogues were organised to address political and development issues that captivated and spurred public debates but that were not properly addressed by a scientific analysis.

Interesting was the issue of coalition formation among opposition parties in Uganda that provoked conversations in the wake of the The Democratic Alliance (TDA), a loose coalition of major opposition parties in Uganda that was formed almost a year prior to the 2016 general elections. Coalition formation was seen as a possible and real threat to the end of the 30-year NRM hold onto to power and as a mechanism for facilitating a stable and peaceful transition of power from one group to another. In 'Pre-electoral coalition and the political economy of democratic consolidation in developing countries: some critical reflections for TDA', Mugisha *et al.*, in line with Arriola (2013), reiterate the importance of an independent and autonomous domestic capitalist class to the success of opposition coalitions, particularly in authoritarian environments. This, they argue, is only possible in a financially liberalised environment. Their comparative analysis of the Kenyan coalition formation experience in 2002 with TDA reveals that, while Kenya's opposition parties managed to coalesce and attract the support of the local capitalist class, TDA was devoid of any trace of support from Ugandan capitalists. In fact, what is visible is the fact that Uganda's producing class comprises largely multinational corporations whose interest in local politics extends largely to whoever guarantees security of their economic interests. This has deprived the opposition of the ability to mobilise the business community to support their political activities and be directly and actively involved in their party agendas. The authors further explain that this strongly accounts for TDA failure

to create a 'socially rooted' coalition and subsequent failure to resolve the gridlock between two presidential candidates who were bidding for the TDA candidature, which signalled the collapse of TDA.

Looking at the South Sudan conflict and state formation through the lens of oil revenues, Kiranda, Kamp and others argue that, contrary to the dominant narratives that see oil revenues as a curse to development in poor countries, from the historical context of conflict in South Sudan and state formation challenges, oil can be seen as central to shaping the dynamics of elite bargains: supporting the holding together of the militia factional-based SPLM, while at the same obstructing the implementation of political reforms within the party to create the foundation for institution-building and democratic accountability.

Ojok, Kabassa *et al.* pick up the cue and examine the paradox of ineffective youth participation in Uganda's political processes despite the existence of legal provisions and structures for representation, in addition to the youth comprising the electoral majority. They argue that underemployment and its attendant effects of social and economic deprivations have impeded the ability of youth to effectively engage in political processes within party, civic or other organisations. This is because they are severely vulnerable to political exploitation by means of financial enticements, which has strengthened clientelism and political patronage, creating a vicious circle of institutional stagnation, unemployment, poverty and clientelism.

Ojok and Kabassa take up the issue of party identification in Uganda and analyse the problem of weak party loyalty and the precariousness of party membership, which has hindered the ability of political organisations to build strong political movements. Contrary to the Michigan school of thought and rational choice theories of party identification, they argue that party identification in Uganda, historical and contemporary, has been driven by the need to capture rents by powerful elites, an Achilles heel for Uganda's democratisation process.

The publication concludes with an article that captures issues that emerged from the youth debate series that the KAS organised in partnership with UNIFOG in November 2015. Krueger reiterates the complexity of youth political participation in Uganda and suggests a multi-level approach for overcoming the challenges that young people are facing in Uganda as well as exploring ways for strengthening youth engagement.

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Pre-Electoral Coalitions and the Political Economy of Democratic Consolidation in Multi-Ethnic Societies: Some Critical Reflections for The Democratic Alliance (TDA)

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Abstract

The question of pre-electoral coalitions remains salient in the discussion of democracy and development, particularly so in emerging states. This paper examines why opposition coalitions succeed in some contexts and not in others. It builds on Arriola's (2013) work to reinforce the proposition that the existence of an independent business class is a critical enabler for the political opposition to access financial capital, and the building of the social networks needed to facilitate bargaining, as well as the formation and sustenance of a cohesive pre-electoral coalition. However, the paper underscores that the extent to which financial liberalisation will positively affect the development of an autonomous political-oriented business community depends on the existence of a local capitalist class prior to liberalisation. Countries that lacked a domestic capitalist class preceding financial liberalisation only enhanced the entry of typically apolitical foreign firms following liberalisation. Yet, the existence of a local capitalist class is crucial as this can be emboldened to support the opposition in mobilising financial capital and managing coordinated electoral strategies. Thus, in the absence of local business support, opposition coalitions tend to rely on largely unguaranteed and often

constrained financing sources, such as support from foreign donors. The findings of this study raise important lessons for those exploring the possibilities of establishing cohesive and stable opposition coalitions in countries like Uganda.

1. Introduction

At the time of writing, a major opposition coalition was at its formative stage, and there is evidence to point to its failure, as illuminated by the inability of the coalition to choose a joint presidential candidate in preparation for Uganda's 2016 general elections. This was largely the driving force behind its formation. The Democratic Alliance (TDA) – as it has been named – attempts to unify opposition political parties, activists and pressure groups to present a joint challenge to Uganda's incumbent president, Yoweri Museveni, and his party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) in the next polls planned for February 2016.

After a series of private meetings between aspiring presidential candidates, party leaders and the TDA summit held in September 2016, TDA failed to agree on a joint presidential candidate. Prior to that, two aspiring presidential candidates – Professor Gilbert Bukenya and Norbert Mao – who had previously expressed an interest in running as TDA flag-bearers, pulled out of the race, leaving Dr Kiiza Besigye and the Hon. Amama Mbabazi, the former Secretary General of the NRM and now leader of the Go Forward movement, in the race. Eventually, a number of private talks between the two candidates failed to yield a

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single candidate, resulting in each of the candidates running for the 2016 elections. In the context of TDA, and drawing from the Kenyan experiences, this paper attempts to examine why some coalition formations succeed and why others fail.

Extant literature has examined the drivers of pre-electoral coalitions, suggesting that institutionally related factors such as ideological compatibility and election rules, to mention only a few, are central to pre-electoral coalitions (PECs) formation.⁵ However, Ghandi and Reuter (2011) examine whether these determinants have the same effect on PECs formation in both established democracies and authoritarian contexts. Their results are striking. They show that because conditions in established democracies fundamentally differ from those in authoritarian environments, institutional factors tend to have modest effects on PECs in the latter. Their analysis supports a conclusion that only party stability and election repression tend to influence parties to form pre-election coalitions in authoritarian contexts. Arriola (2013) has pushed the debate further by examining what explains PECs formation and success in multi-ethnic authoritarian environments. She underscores the importance of business financing of opposition parties and attributes this feat to financial liberalisation.

This paper supports the proposition that the existence of an independent business class is a critical enabler for the political opposition to access the financial capital and social networks needed to facilitate bargaining as well as the formation and sustenance of a cohesive pre-electoral coalition. However, we find the assumption underpinning Arriola's main argument somewhat problematic. It assumes that financial

liberalisation can be expected to have the same effect on business development, political alliance and financing of PECs formation, which might not necessarily be the case. Indeed, the fact that many African countries have undergone financial liberalisation but also registered varying democratic transition outcomes certainly calls Arriola's argument into question. Our paper attempts to correct this gap.

The central argument of this paper is that the extent to which financial liberalisation fosters the emergence and growth of the business community in a way that positively contributes to effective coalition bargaining and formation, depends in large part on the nature of the capitalist class prior to liberalisation. In countries where a modicum of a capitalist class existed prior to liberalisation, deregulating the financial sector fostered the emergence of a well-diversified business community with linkages and significant 'exit options' within and outside the country, unencumbered by state control. In this context, such a financially independent and emboldened business community finds it easier to back the opposition in coalition bargaining and formation as a way of hedging their bets for acquiring favours or financial concessions, depending on whichever government might win the election. On the other hand, countries where a local capitalist class was poorly or weakly developed prior to liberalisation, financial liberalisation only facilitated the entry of foreign firms within the local economy. In the long run, the business community that emerged is one dominated by foreign corporations often concentrated in only a few specific areas, such as extraction and telecommunication services, and with special ties with the governing elites. This 'unholy' alliance between the business community and the governing

5 ³ Wahman 2011; Golder 2005.

elites hinders the latter from directly engaging in local politics. As a result, their interest in local political processes extends only as far as the processes affect their investments within the country. In this context, the opposition is significantly constrained because of its inability to mobilise the support of the most critical constituency – the business community. This often precludes opposition parties from forming cohesive coalitions with the ability to secure cross-ethnic endorsements. Thus, the propensity towards consolidating and deepening democratic transitions in such contexts is often minimal.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows: Section 2 examines why opposition parties form pre-electoral coalitions; Section 3 reviews the literature on standard explanations of coalition formation; Section 4 examines the incentives of electoral coordination in both democracies and authoritarian contexts, while Section 5 reviews Arriola's argument and advances a different theoretical approach. Sections 6 and 7 present analyses of Kenya and Cameroon PECs experiences with important lessons for TDA, which is discussed in Section 8. Section 9 concludes the paper.

2. Why do opposition parties form pre-electoral coalitions?

Theoretical literature claims that opposition parties engage in coalition formation primarily in order to get into government. Two main motivations underlie this grand objective: first, to acquire office because there are specific distributional payoffs that come with holding a cabinet position; and second, to influence the public policy decision-making process.⁶ However, whichever motivation dominates coalition bargaining and formation processes has remained a matter of contested discussion.

6 Debus 2009.

Budge and Laver (1986) find these two motivations inextricably bound. They show that office-seeking can be an 'end and a means to an end'. In the first place, office may be valued intrinsically in and for itself because of particular payoffs that come with holding office such as prestige, power, financial resources, and public limelight; and in the second place, office may be valued only 'instrumentally' for the ability it gives to influence policy outputs.⁷ Specifically, membership of government provides two different methods of influencing public policy: First, cabinet portfolios offer votes in cabinet meetings and thus the opportunity to influence cabinet decisions; and second, all portfolios offer administrative control over government departments, with the wide range of opportunities to influence policy that this confers.⁸

Therefore, the extent to which coalition bargaining and the subsequent formation are shaped by policy negotiation rather than a fair distribution of office portfolios or vice versa depends to a large degree on the nature of political systems and, specifically, the power that voters have to influence the behaviour of political agents. Rational choice theories portray voters as principally interested in policy maximisation, while politicians as entrepreneurs that are primarily dealing in policies in order to win votes and attain office.⁹ However, this is seldom as straightforward as often portrayed by rational choice theorists. Arriola (2013), for instance, has shown that in patronage-based political systems, the voting behaviour of voters is often swayed by politicians who are willing and able to extend specific gifts.¹⁰ Thus, from this context, voters' interest in coalition formation may not necessarily be shaped by policy representation but perhaps by how

7 Budge & Laver 1986.

8 Ibid.

9 Carroll & Cox 2007.

10 Arriola 2013.

the expected coalition alliance will effectively distribute patronage to different regional voting blocs. But even where voters' behaviour has a strong inclination towards policy processes, as perhaps the case may be in most advanced industrial democracies, owing to information asymmetries between voters and politicians directly involved in coalition negotiations, Carroll and Cox (2007) show that politicians may adeptly sacrifice office portfolios in order to achieve greater policy dominance in specific areas, or may sacrifice policy influence in order to achieve more office portfolios.¹¹

Therefore, the incentives that structure the behaviour of political actors in coalition bargaining and formation depend on a complex combination of many determining variables, including how voters influence politicians' behaviour, the nature of party systems and the overall structure of political competition. But are incentives for coalition formation the same as those that operate in authoritarian environments?

2.1 Incentives for coordination in an authoritarian context versus established democracies

In 2002, 72 per cent of authoritarian regimes held multiparty elections within the previous five years. Despite holding regular elections, these regimes have become skilful in tilting and winning electoral contests by relying on a 'menu of options' that facilitate the manipulation of elections¹². These include: fraud, repression, patronage distribution, control over information and general abuse of state resources. From this context, an interesting question, therefore, would be: why do authoritarian regimes hold elections very well knowing that they

are unwilling to compete with the opposition on a level playing field?

Several reasons feature in political science literature. Theorists have argued that these regimes may hold elections to enhance their legitimacy, curry favour with the international community, gather information on supporters and opponents, demonstrate their dominance, or assuage and co-opt domestic opponents.¹³ In the light of these arguments, one may ask: To what extent is opposition parties' behaviour in authoritarian elections driven by institutional factors that motivate parties competing in democratic contests? What factors are unique to authoritarian elections and how do they influence the behaviour of opposition parties?

Electoral coordination among competing parties in authoritarian elections is interesting for similar but somewhat additional reasons as in democratic elections. Legislatures in non-democracies are important institutional arenas in which some groups have access to policy-making and rent-seeking opportunities.¹⁴ Thus, we should expect that PECs, to the extent that they shape electoral results, will have important effects on who gets what. However, the authoritarian context is very different from the democratic context in so many ways, which may account for the differences in incentives faced by political actors in both contexts.

Political actors in the authoritarian context enter the electoral market facing a highly unlevelled field. Authoritarian elections involve incumbents who have fewer limits to how far they are willing to go to win elections. With the ability to create a non-level playing field, authoritarian incumbents can keep the opposition divided. The incumbent may use coercion or the power of the state

¹¹ Carroll & Cox 2007.

¹² Wahman 2011.

¹³ Ghandi & Reuter 2013.

¹⁴ Ibid.

to ensure that opposition forces do not coalesce. In a study by Ghandi and Reuter (2013), for example, it is reported that, in Russia, the pro-Kremlin United Russia Party survived several close calls at the hands of electoral blocs in regional elections in the 2000s. In response, the Kremlin moved to ban the formation of blocs at both the national and regional levels. Subsequent to these changes, any parties wishing to unite before an election would have to formally register a new party, a process that is subject to significant legal barriers.

At times, authoritarian leaders may resort to co-optation to divide the opposition.¹⁵ The autocrat may proffer patronage, perks and offices to some members of the opposition while denying these benefits to others. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, prominent opposition leader Almaz Atambayev was neutralised as an opposition figure after being named prime minister by President Kurmanbek Bakiyev. Arriola has further substantiated this claim by arguing that the use of state 'carrot-and-stick' methods was more pronounced during the 1960s and 1970s when development was mainly state-driven. This gave autocratic leaders untrammelled control of financial capital that they effectively used to weaken and stifle any kind of opposition to their rule.¹⁶ In some countries, autocracies have created state-sanctioned opposition parties in order to chip votes away from the opposition but remain under regime control. Ghandi and Reuter indicate that in Putin-era Russia, the Kremlin created a centre-left parastatal opposition party, Just Russia, which criticises the ruling party but not Putin.¹⁷

15 Ghandi & Reuter 2013.

16 Arriola 2013

17 Crucially, the party occupies a left-of-centre ideological position, drawing votes away from the Communist Party but always refusing to cooperate with either the communists or the non-parliamentary opposition at election time.

Another issue that is characteristic of authoritarian elections is the uncertainty about the incumbent's willingness to cede power once he loses an election. In democracies, elections are means of 'institutionalising uncertainty' in that when an incumbent loses an election he or she will step down from power.¹⁸ However, in authoritarian elections, there are often great uncertainties about whether the incumbent would be willing to step down in the event of electoral defeat, especially because ceding involves a regime transition. Also related is the fact that an opposition coalition may result in an electoral victory which is expected to be followed by a regime transition. This implies the stakes of an election are high not only for the incumbent, but also for opposition parties. As mentioned earlier, a pre-electoral coalition for a legislative election entails an agreement about how parties are going to coordinate their electoral candidates and campaigns. It may also involve an agreement about the governing coalition should the coalition win a legislative majority, particularly, who within the coalition will receive which cabinet portfolios.¹⁹ As electoral victory and a regime transition seem more likely, anti-regime parties may be uncertain about how much they can trust their coalition partners to honour any deal during or after an election. Ghandi and Reuter (2013:146) observe that:

....a coalition member may renege on the agreement by sponsoring candidates in constituencies where it had promised to withdraw in favour of a coalition partner. Alternatively, renegeing may happen after an election, such as when a party within a pre-electoral coalition refuses to go into government with coalition members.

18 Ghand & Reuter 2013.

19 Martin & Stevenson 2001; Sened 1996; Lees 2010; Ghandi & Reuter 2013

Mistrust among opposition parties may be a product of the authoritarianism, resulting from some parties having a chequered past of cooperating with the regime; others are periodically harassed and banned from competing. Also because many authoritarian countries have no or little experience of a democratic past, opposition parties often have no experience of effectively organising and governing. As a result, many political parties in authoritarian environments are more likely to become what Ghandi and Reuter call the 'ephemeral vehicles for advancing personal ambition', leading to high party volatility.²⁰ Without a stable past of cooperating and with uncertainty about who their bargaining partners might be in future, parties may find it difficult to form meaningful reputations and future expectations that are conducive to coalition-building. In Putnam's (1993) terms, the social capital among political actors within the opposition rank operating in authoritarian environments is severely disfigured because of the conditions characteristic of the context in which they operate. This has made it difficult for them to maintain cohesiveness, a central element in coalition-building.

However, Arriola (2013), in her seminal work, argues that financial liberalisation holds the potential for undermining the ability of the incumbents in authoritarian regimes to monopolise financial capital, which, in the long run, allows the opposition to marshal alternative sources of finance required to facilitate campaign investments. Arriola specifically argues that financial liberalisation fosters the emergence and growth of a vibrant business community, which enables the opposition to develop linkages with the business fraternity. A financially independent

business community is often more emboldened to support the opposition in mobilising financial capital and managing coordinated electoral strategies. Financial capital is not only important for financing patronage by reaching out to notables in various ethnic groups, but also allows for building broad cross-ethnic linkages that may potentially enhance social capital, galvanising into a cohesive organisational force that effectively challenges the incumbent for power.²¹

However, evidence has shown that it is not true that financial liberalisation will necessarily promote the growth of a business community that positively contributes to democratisation.²² The fact that nearly all African countries have undergone financial liberalisation but with fundamentally diverging trajectories of opposition party coalition-building outcomes perhaps points to the need to analyse the context in which financial liberalisation is implemented; stated differently, the initial conditions prior to financial liberalisation in this case matter a lot. In what follows below, we develop a theoretical framework that builds on Arriola's work but goes further to demonstrate that initial conditions, specifically the nature of the capitalist class in different countries, may produce varying results in terms of coalition formation once financial liberalisation is undertaken.

3. The political economy of democratic consolidation in multi-ethnic societies: A theoretical framework

Electoral coalitions in multi-ethnic societies have produced varying outcomes for two main reasons. First, PECs essentially represent the coordination of electoral strategies among coalition partners, which, by definition, invokes coordination

²¹ Arriola 2013

²² See Mkandawire & Soludo 1999

²⁰ Ibid.

problems largely resulting from high transaction costs of building consensus among ethnically competing groups. This scenario is particularly more problematic in ethnically diverse societies where political actors tend to exacerbate ethnic divisions as an instrumentally viable method of circumventing the high transaction costs of building cross-ethnic majorities to win and retain political power.²³ Second, elections are resource-intensive exercises, not least in patronage-based political systems. Therefore, when securing resources on the basis of ethnicity becomes the mode of structuring political life, following Daniel Posner, Arriola suggests that, in coalition bargaining and formation processes, politicians who make promises to share the spoils of power with members of other ethnic groups are not likely to be viewed as credible. Thus, a coalition candidate for national office who happens to be from one ethnic group cannot be expected to win votes from other ethnic groups through direct appeals. Cross-ethnic endorsements are costly in patronage-based polities. Incumbents in authoritarian regimes often circumvent this obstacle through untrammelled control of state resources. Hence, a candidate who seeks to be a coalition leader or formateur – the candidate of a multi-ethnic coalition – must have the financial means to purchase cross-ethnic endorsements.²⁴

Prospective coalition partners expect to be compensated for delivering their co-ethnic votes because they

23 Conde (2015)'s dissertation submitted to the Department of International Development at the London School of Economics and Political Science, demonstrates how ethnic division among ethnically diverse communities has been instrumentally used in Guinea, by both democrats and autocrats, to circumvent the high transaction cost of building cross-ethnic majorities to acquire and retain power.

24 Arriola 2013.

themselves use material inducements to secure political loyalty. Oftentimes they distribute cash, food or goods to ensure continuity of that support. Incumbents in authoritarian environments have overcome this commitment problem by deploying state resources to secure cross-ethnic endorsements that constitute multi-ethnic coalitions in most of Africa's greenhorn multiparty systems. Opposition parties, however, are forced to rely on private resources to do the same. Arriola has argued that during the 1960s and 1970s, when the development paradigm was state-led, opposition parties had limited capital for financing material inducements to guarantee political loyalty. However, as the development paradigm tilted towards market-oriented approaches beginning in the 1980s, financial liberalisation specifically has enhanced the capability of opposition parties to form multi-ethnic coalitions by forcing the incumbents to relinquish the historic state control over capital. It is thus hypothesised that multi-ethnic opposition coalitions are unlikely to emerge where the state continues to serve as a 'gatekeeper' for credit and loans for the business class, principally because, as long as the incumbent exercises such control, the business community will refrain from funding the opposition. This, in turn, means that no opposition candidate can afford to secure cross-ethnic endorsements.²⁵

On the other hand, multi-ethnic opposition coalitions should be more likely to form under conditions of financial liberalisation because an autonomous business class is more emboldened to extend support to the opposition without fear of reprisal. The access to campaign resources among the opposition influences the extent to which a would-be formateur can overcome the commitment problems inherent in

25 Ibid.

coalition bargaining. However, if the business community refrains from funding the opposition coalition, negotiations among the opposition are limited to promises about post-electoral payoffs.²⁶

The would-be formateur can offer power-sharing promises in exchange for other political endorsements, which involve standing down from election and delivering their co-ethnic votes. These promises might include the vice presidency, a number of cabinet seats, or control of specific government ministries. Thus, a financially constrained opposition formateur faces a commitment problem in this respect: her prospective coalition partner knows that the formateur has no means of enforcing those power-sharing promises once she is installed in office. A politician might find that she receives less than what was promised or nothing at all despite having rallied her co-ethnics in support of the formateur. This, therefore, poses a considerable risk for a politician whose own leadership position depends on her ability to deliver resources to her constituents. She may well prefer to withhold her endorsement and compete for office independently.²⁷

On the other hand, when the opposition can secure campaign funding from the business community, a formateur can make power-sharing promises as well as promise to undertake the costs associated with mobilising their co-ethnics. Thus business is central to this rendering of opposition coalition bargaining, not because it is inherently democratic, but because it seeks to protect its own interests. Bankrolling the formation of a multi-ethnic opposition coalition enables business to demand favours or concessions from whichever side wins the next election.²⁸

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

While we may not dispute Arriola's theory of financial liberalisation and its salient implications for coalition bargaining and formation, one central question can be asked: Why has financial liberalisation, that was foisted upon many African countries since 1980s, not generated similar outcomes in opposition coalition bargaining and formation as nicely illustrated in Arriola's work? That of course is not to deny the impact that the liberalisation of the financial sector can potentially have in fostering the growth and development of the business community and its attendant effects on democratisation. But rather it is to inquire why financial liberalisation facilitates the deepening of democratic governance in some contexts and not others.

We build on Arriola's work, but at the same time subtly depart from it by arguing that the extent to which financial liberalisation fosters the emergence and growth of the business community in a way that positively contributes to effective coalition bargaining and formation, depends in large part on the nature of the capitalist class prior to liberalisation. In countries where a modicum of a capitalist class existed prior to liberalisation, deregulating the financial sector frees up the economic space, thus enhancing the growth and expansion of the local capitalist class. In the long run, the emergence of a well-diversified business community with linkages and significant 'exit options' within and outside the country tends to break the dependence of the business community on the state for business contracts etc. Thus, in this context, a financially independent and emboldened business community, as Arriola suggests, will find it easier to back the opposition in coalition bargaining and formation as a way of hedging their bets for acquiring favours or financial concessions, depending on whichever government

might win the election. Therefore, the inclusion of the business community in opposition coalition bargaining processes significantly reduces the commitment problem involved in the distribution of patronage to key notables of various ethnic groups, in the end increasing the chances of garnering cross-ethnic endorsements.

On the other hand, for countries where a local capitalist class was poorly or weakly developed prior to liberalisation, financial liberalisation only facilitates the entry of foreign firms within the local economy. In the long run, the business community that emerges is one that is dominated by foreign corporations often concentrated in only a few specific areas, such as extraction and telecommunication services, and with special ties with the governing elites. This 'unholy' alliance between the foreign-dominated business community and the governing elites hinders the latter from directly engaging in local politics. As a result, their interest in local political processes extends only as far as the processes affect their investments within the country. In this context, the opposition is significantly constrained because of its inability to mobilise the support of the most critical constituency – the business community. This often precludes opposition parties from forming cohesive coalitions with the ability to secure cross-ethnic endorsements. Thus, the propensity towards consolidating and deepening democratic transitions in such contexts is often minimal.

4. Case study: Opposition coalition formation in Kenya, 1991-2002

Kenyan politicians had considered the possibility of forming a multi-ethnic coalition in the run-up to the 1992 and 1997 presidential elections but they often disagreed

on who would become the coalition candidate. However, in the 2002 general election, the National Rainbow Alliance (NARC) – an opposition coalition – was formed and defeated, the Kenyan African National Union (KANU) and won 133 parliamentary seats out of 222, becoming the nation's ruling party.²⁹ At the same time, Uhuru Kenyatta, KANU's candidate for the presidential election who had been named to succeed then president Daniel Arap Moi (Kenya's second president), lost to NARC's candidate, Mwai Kibaki.

4.1 The origins of opposition coalition politics in Kenya

Following the restoration of the multiparty system in the 1990s, Forum for Restoration of Democracy (FORD) – a cradle of Kenya's democracy – was formed and provided the basis for the emergence of the first opposition party. FORD enjoyed widespread support across the nation except only in Moi's home district and the region surrounding that district.³⁰ However, within a short time following its formation, FORD failed to agree on a candidate to nominate for the presidential election. This forced it to splinter into two parties: FORD-Kenya and FORD-Asili. Most of the executive members of FORD-Kenya were ethnic Luos and Luhyas from Nyanza and western provinces. By contrast the executives of FORD-Asili were predominantly ethnic Kikuyus, mainly from the southern part of central province. At the same time, Kibaki, a former vice president and finance minister in the KANU government, quit government and formed the Democratic Party of Kenya (DP), drawing the core support of wealthy businesspersons and well-off farmers, mainly from Nairobi and the northern part of central province. Including Kibaki, who was

²⁹ Tsuda 2010

³⁰ Ibid

the chairperson of the DP, the party executives consisted of Kikuyus, Embus, and the Merus from the northern part of central province and the neighbouring districts of eastern province. This gave the DP an identity as a regional party.³¹

In the seventh general election held in 1992, three regional parties (FORD-Kenya, FORD-Asili and DP) that had split from the main parties (FORD and KANU) ended up contesting against KANU as opposition parties. The views of the opposition parties were united in that all of them demanded democratisation. However, since the opposition was divided into several parties, the vote in the elections was split. As a result, Moi was re-elected as president albeit receiving only 40 per cent of the vote. A similar event would be repeated in the eighth general elections as the fragmentation of the opposition parties further deepened. In the parliamentary elections of 1997, the DP, FORD-Kenya and other small opposition parties each won from one to 41 seats respectively – which constituted 40 per cent of the 210 seats). They again failed to bring to an end the KANU-Moi regime; KANU won 113 seats of the 210 seats or slightly over 50 per cent of the total. Receiving less than 40 per cent of the presidential vote, Moi was again re-elected into office. In fact, Tsuda (2010) suggests that had the opposition parties united, they would have won.

Lessons of the experience of two general elections had been properly taken by the opposition parties. In October 2002, NARC was formed. It started as an umbrella organisation bringing together most of the then major opposition parties, including mainly the DP, FORD-Kenya and a large proportion of ex-KANU MPs. Forming a coalition for the ninth general elections, NARC not only agreed to nominate

Kibaki as its sole candidate in the presidential elections, but also eventually succeeded in nominating parliamentary candidates of affiliated parties as NARC candidates in most of the constituencies.³² The result was a massive victory won by NARC and by Kibaki as the new president of Kenya, bringing an end to the Moi era and ushering in a new dawn of peaceful democratic transitions. So, why did the NARC coalition succeed and yet earlier attempts had failed?

4.2 Going deeper to understand the structural explanations of NARC's success

NARC owes its success in large part to the emergence of a strong local business community that resulted from the a combination of policies undertaken by the earlier post-independence government,³³ and later financial liberalisation reforms foisted upon Moi's government in the 1990s by the international financial institutions (IFIs).³⁴ Kenya's colonial government had established a settler economy by forcefully expropriating over three million hectares of land from Kikuyus, more than half of which was arable land sustainable for cash crop farming.³⁵ In the run-up to independence, the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion in the late 1940s and the subsequent state of emergency in 1952 clearly illuminated the centrality of the land question, causing panic among white settlers. The economic decline that had begun to take effect forced the colonial government to concede to African demands and begin implementing land resettlement programmes. Although the general mood among the some post-independence elites was in favour of reinstating the land system prior to colonisation, unlike many other African governments, the Kenyan post-independence

³² Elischer 2008.

³³ Karuti 2009.

³⁴ Arriola 2013.

³⁵ Karuti 2009; Swainson 1980.

³¹ Ibid.

government chose to prioritise maintaining a stable economy and fostering a unitary government. Consequently, the government undertook land settlement measures that particularly involved moving Kikuyus off European farms. Though this move was very unpopular, it laid the foundation for the preservation of the local bourgeoisie that built in the resilience mechanisms for Kenya's economy throughout the 1970s and 1980s.³⁶

However, a series of international shocks pummelled Kenya's economy, including falling commodity prices for coffee and tea exports, that by the 1990s Moi's regime had grown to depend on external support for 45 per cent of its operating budget.³⁷ But with priorities shifting at the end of the Cold War, Kenya's donors chose to suspend their aid in 1991, when Moi slowed down progress on political and economic reforms. Moi was eventually compelled by the IFIs to pursue financial liberalisation, although he resisted efforts to dismantle the instruments that sustained his patronage-based regime.

Beginning in 1993 and continuing over the next several years, a number of reforms progressively diminished Moi's government influence over capital: interest rates were deregulated; foreign exchange controls were eliminated; a flexible exchange rate was adopted; and credit controls were removed. The government also began to divest itself of equity holdings in two of the country's largest commercial banks.³⁸

Financial reforms created the environment that unleashed the growth of the local business community and eventually changed the relationship between the business

community and Moi's regime. In the immediate years following liberalisation, Moi sought to retain the support of Kikuyu entrepreneurs because they were the most likely financiers of his strongest rival, Mwai Kibaki, an ethnic Kikuyu and a former vice president and minister of finance. It is reported that Moi personally contacted entrepreneurs he suspected of providing funds to the opposition and persuaded them to make contributions to his campaign fund instead. Moi did not have to issue direct threats since these entrepreneurs assumed their businesses would suffer reprisals once they were found to be contributors to the opposition. This fear explains why several Kikuyu entrepreneurs chose to participate in the Central Province Development Support Group (CPDSG), which coordinated Kikuyu elites on behalf of Moi's re-election campaign in the 1997 presidential election.³⁹

However, with time, several entrepreneurs became willing to publicly defect from the ruling party in support of the opposition. Important multiple trends such as the continuous growth of privately owned banks, the increasing liberalisation of capital and credit, and the privatisation of the country's largest bank in 1998, were a reflection of Moi's diminished capacity to exact financial reprisals. It was in this context that Kibaki, who would become the coalition candidate, expanded his pool of donors. A decade of financial liberalisation had sufficiently emboldened business entrepreneurs to publicly support Kibaki's bid for president. Particularly, a Council of Elders, as Kibaki's close circle of donors was named, included some 20 prominent businessmen.⁴⁰

This group was chaired by Joseph Wanjui, who had been a member

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Arriola 2013

³⁸ O'Brien & Ryan 2000; World Bank 2003.

³⁹ Arriola 2013.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

of the CPSDG when it supported Moi in 1997, and included other former CPDSG members such as Macharia and Kirubi.⁴¹ These entrepreneurs did not simply raise funds for Kibaki's campaign within the broader business community; they also acted as de facto campaign advisors who developed the financial strategy required to reach out to politicians from other ethnic groups. They also directly participated in publicly brokering endorsements for Kibaki's candidacy, crisscrossing the country to secure the support of local notables as well as rival candidates from other ethnic groups.⁴²

4.3 Opposition bargaining: Overcoming the commitment problem

Negotiations for the formation of a multi-ethnic coalition started shortly before the 2002 general elections involving mainly Kibaki, Michael Kijana Wamalwa and Charity Ngilu, all actors that had competed separately in the 1997 presidential elections against Moi. The multi-ethnic opposition coalition that was built around Kibaki's candidacy was announced a month before a faction known as the Rainbow Alliance defected from the ruling party on 18 October 2002. The members of the Rainbow Alliance were later joined by Kibaki to form an expanded coalition known as the NARC.⁴³

The financing provided by the Kenyan business community during the 2002 election campaign enabled Kibaki to secure cross-ethnic endorsements. For example, Kibaki's negotiations with Wamalwa, an ethnic Luhya who eventually became his vice-presidential nominee, illustrates the importance of such payments. In the months

leading to the formation of a multi-ethnic opposition coalition around Kibaki's candidacy, Wamalwa had sought to capitalise on latent anti-Kikuyu sentiments by threatening to pull out of any coalition if Kibaki were selected as its candidate. Wamalwa's support for Kibaki's candidacy was secured only after he was compensated upfront. In fact, individuals who represented both sides in the coalition negotiations confirmed that, though the promise of vice presidency had already been extended, the bargain was sealed only once a monetary payment was used to supplement the power-sharing promise. Wamalwa eventually agreed to Kibaki's presidency in exchange for the vice presidency and payment of a large enough sum of money to settle outstanding debts associated with his previous presidential bid.⁴⁴

What is important to note is that Kibaki did not merely seek Wamalwa's withdrawal from the presidential race; rather he also needed Wamalwa to actively participate in the coalition and convince his co-ethnic Luhya, one of Kenya's largest constituencies (see Table 1), to support Kibaki's candidacy. And Wamalwa did so. At a mass rally in Kakamega, the largest city in Luhyaland, Wamalwa symbolically recognised Kibaki as an elder of the Luhya community and endorsed him as the best candidate for advancing their community interests. As a result, three-quarters of the votes cast by Wamalwa's co-ethnics would subsequently go to Kibaki, enabling Kibaki, in 2002, to bring about Kenya's first democratic transition.⁴⁵

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

41 Samuel Macharia was the owner of the country's largest private radio network and Kirubi is a prominent businessman.

42 Arriola 2013.

43 Ibid.

Table 1: Ethnic composition of Kenya

Ethnic group	Percentage share of total population
Kikuyu	21
Luhya	14
Luo	12
Kalenjin	12
Kamba	11
Kisii	6
Meru	5
Mijikenda	5
Maasai	2
Other/small communities	12

Source: Elischer 2008:10

5. Case study: Opposition coalition formation in Cameroon, 1991-2004

In the 1990s, an economic crisis, particularly the pummelling of credit provision in Cameroon, led to the implementation of structural adjustment programmes prescribed by the IFIs, which also coincided with the country's transition to multiparty politics.⁴⁶ President Paul Biya had ruled the country since 1984 when the first post-independence president, Ahmadou Ahidjo willingly stepped down from power. He had ruled the country as a single-party state that significantly stifled any opposition to his reign. In the 1990s, the transition to multiparty politics encouraged the formation of an opposition coalition intended to dislodge Biya's unyielding hold onto to power. Specifically, the formation of the Coalition pour la Reconciliation et la Reconstruction Nationale (CRRN) in the run-up to the 2004 general elections was seen as a progressive step towards embracing democratic rule in Cameroon.⁴⁷ CRRN was a proto-coalition between John Fru Ndi and Adamou Ndam Njoya, both opposition politicians who represented different

constituencies. However, CRRN failed to agree on the selection of its coalition candidate owing to severe disagreements between Fru Ndi and Ndam Njoya over the leadership of the coalition.⁴⁸ Subsequently Fru Ndi withdrew from the coalition, causing fragmentation of the coalition, which largely accounted for their defeat by president Biya. So, why was there disagreement between Fru Ndi and Ndam Njoya over the choice of the coalition candidate and the eventual collapse of the coalition?

5.1 Accounting for CRRN failure

The opposition parties failed to effectively mobilise the business community to back their campaign. This is because the business community was weak and fragmented, and largely dependent on the state for its access to finance and trade.⁴⁹ This structure of Cameroon's business had its roots in the colonial establishment of her economy and the subsequent policies implemented by the post-independence government. Cameroon had been created as a plantation economy by the French and the British, who controlled the north and south respectively. Parastatals

⁴⁶ Konings 1996.

⁴⁷ Arriola 2013.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

and plantations were established to facilitate the production and export of the then Cameroonian lucrative agricultural commodities, mainly cocoa, tea, coffee, bananas and palm oil.⁵⁰ The predominant French role in the national economy was clearly indicated by the import-export statistics; in 1961, France accounted for 59 per cent of Cameroon's exports and 55 per cent of its imports, all under state control.⁵¹ The post-independence Cameroon government maintained control over this lucrative international trade and resources in order to generate revenues to finance its expanded bureaucracy. Moreover, the agreement of cooperation signed between France and Cameroon before independence ensured the extension of France's dominance in the domestic and foreign policies of Cameroon. The control over the bulk of oil revenue further enhanced the capacity of the government to undermine the emergence of an autonomous capitalist class.⁵²

In the 1990s, after experiencing a series of economic crises, Biya's regime agreed to implement structural adjustment programmes involving the removal of controls over financial capital and exchange rates, as well as divesting of the country's inefficient parastatals. However, oil rents, coupled with French support, enabled Biya's regime to maintain control over capital and effectively stave off liberalising reforms despite mounting pressure from external and domestic sources.⁵³ For instance, four agreements negotiated with the IMF between 1988 and 1996 were never implemented despite deteriorating economic conditions. Biya's regime refused to yield even in 1991 when the business community joined the economic boycott to demand political

and economic reforms. But soon, the business community abandoned the opposition once Biya's regime proved capable of withstanding several months of revenue losses.⁵⁴

Biya's regime continued to act as a financial gatekeeper vis-à-vis business throughout the 1990s. A former resident representative of the IMF would note that by the mid-decade Cameroon's finance minister still exercised 'effective and real authority' in the allocation of credit. Any representative seeking a commercial loan would have to interact with a financial institution directly or indirectly controlled by the regime.⁵⁵

5.2 Opposition and possible business alliance: Their Achilles heel

The unyielding government control over finance, coupled with historical weaknesses of the business class, ensured that the business community was strongly allied to Biya. Entrepreneurs from the Bamileke ethnic group, those who dominated commerce in Cameroon, understood that they could not remain in business without reaching an understanding with the regime, especially as their financing options narrowed in the 1990s. The business community's alliance with Biya was reflected in the number of Bamileke entrepreneurs serving as ruling party candidates. It represented a departure for a business community that long eschewed electoral politics.⁵⁶ In fact, with the return to multipartism, prominent business entrepreneurs entered politics as ruling party candidates in constituencies that had become opposition bastions. For example Defosso, who had been previously punished; Andre Sohaing, president of the Groupement des Importateurs

50 Konings 1996.

51 Ibid.

52 Atangana 1997.

53 Arriola 2013.

54 Ibid.

55 Ibid.

56 Ngayap 1983; Arriola 2013.

Camerounais; Pierre Tchanque, a long-time president of the national chamber of commerce, all became ruling party mayors.⁵⁷

Thus, the constraints on the local business community, particularly the politicisation of finance, contributed to the failure to organise a cohesive multi-ethnic opposition coalition in the run-up to Cameroon's 2004 presidential election. Although two prominent opposition leaders, Fru Ndi and Ndam Njoya, managed to forge an opposition coalition that would present a viable electoral strategy to challenge Biya, these politicians could not afford to secure cross-ethnic endorsements without the support of the business community. According to the representatives who participated in the CRRN negotiations, neither of the opposition candidates had sufficient resources to impose himself as a coalition candidate. Fru Ndi, who some analysts believe defeated Biya in the possibly rigged 1992 election, could find no prominent business supporters for his candidacy. As a result, he not only had a difficult time holding his own party together, but also could not afford the payments necessary to secure the endorsements of others, which were expected in the course of negotiations.⁵⁸

Consequently, opposition leaders agreed to leave the selection of a coalition candidate to a committee of CRRN members, since none had the resources to act as a coalition candidate. But in this context, Fru Ndi, the once presumed leader of the opposition, failed to become the coalition flag-bearer, in part because his partners concluded he could not raise the funds needed to sustain a national campaign. The CRRB instead chose Ndam Njoya, a member of an ethnic minority,

because he could raise funds among the Cameroonian diaspora. He left for France to meet with diaspora representatives almost immediately after being revealed as the CRRN candidate. The CRRN, which potentially would have become Cameroon's first multi-ethnic opposition coalition, ultimately fragmented when Fru Ndi chose to withdraw rather than endorse Ndam Njoya, even after being promised a cabinet position of his choice. Fru Ndi's departure was followed by others who claimed that Ndam Njoya lacked the resources to compensate for their support.⁵⁹

6. Lessons from Cameroon and Kenya and their implications for The Democratic Alliance (TDA)

6.1 Origin and structure of TDA

On 10 June 2015, a coalition was announced by opposition parties, pressure groups and political activists to build a united front against the NRM under president Museveni in the run-up to the 2016 general elections. The Democratic Alliance (TDA) tries to unify pro-democratic forces in Uganda under one organisation to achieve political change.

The main agreement about coalition-building was made in April 2015. Two months later, leaders of opposition parties – the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), the Democratic Party (DP), the Conservative Party (CP), the Justice Forum (Jeema), the Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA), the People's Progressive Party (PPP) and former vice-president, Professor Gilbert Bukenya – officially signed the Protocol of The Democratic Alliance.⁶⁰ They agreed on the goal 'to win power and form government

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Online available: <http://de.scribd.com/doc/275299631/The-Democratic-Alliance-Protocol>.

⁵⁷ Arriola 2013.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

in order to build a Uganda where there is equal opportunity and shared prosperity for all citizens.⁶¹ To achieve this goal, TDA is willing to mobilise its capacities among all members, to design a mutual policy agenda, to field candidates for all electoral positions and the electoral offices and to promote electoral reforms.⁶²

The main governance organs which rule TDA are the Summit, the National Candidates Committee (NCC) and the Secretariat. The Summit is the highest decision-making organ and, therefore, responsible for policy agenda-setting, the financial resources of TDA, admitting new members, settling conflicts between TDA members, and facilitating and coordinating processes for selecting a joint presidential candidate. In order to ensure efficient realisation of its tasks, the Summit established a Campaign Strategy and Coordination Committee, a Finance and Fundraising Committee, a Legal Affairs Committee and a Dispute Resolution Committee. The Summit comprises representatives of the political parties and the pressure groups and eminent Ugandan men and women. Two co-chairpersons are elected by the Summit by consensus.⁶³ The NCC is responsible for coordinating the identification of joint candidates at all levels. Members of the NCC are the Secretaries of Mobilisation of the parties. Five experts, six eminent Ugandan men and women and six youth representatives approved by the Summit are part of the committee as well.⁶⁴

All administrative and coordination tasks fall under the responsibility of the National Secretariat. It organises meetings, plans events, prepares documentation and the annual

budget, promotes the ideas of TDA and do research on relevant fields. The head of the Secretariat is the Chief Executive Officer.⁶⁵ One of the most important organs that are anticipated to be established after winning power is the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU). During the transition period, the TGNU will implement electoral, political and economic reforms and fight corruption. The president under the TGNU will be limited to serve in this position for only five years.⁶⁶

6.2 Policies of TDA

There are no clear policies TDA members have agreed on yet, except the electoral reform proposals which are laid down in Annexes 1 and 2 of the Protocol of The Democratic Alliance and the will to overcome the old government. But even on the issue of electoral reforms the members did not find a final solution. The majority of the members believe that they should participate in the 2016 elections even though they are unable to enforce electoral reforms. Others, especially the FDC flag-bearer in the 2016 presidential elections, Dr Kiiza Besigye, are of the opinion that elections without reforms are worthless. Their thinking advances the view that attaining joint candidates for the upcoming elections contradicts the agreement to enforce electoral reforms.⁶⁷ Thus, it is likely to be difficult to build a strong policy agenda when there is disagreement on the main strategy of TDA.

6.3 Internal problems and selection of joint candidates

TDA, in its formation, confronted a serious challenge of internal fragmentation stemming partly from

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Online available: <http://www.observer.ug/news-headlines/38309-will-opposition-coalition-deliver>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

ideological differences, and at times on a number of personal issues. For instance, many TDA member representatives could not reach a consensus on electoral reforms. One group, led by Dr Kiiza Besigye argued that without electoral reforms, it would be useless to participate in elections and thus they should be boycotted; others insisted that participation in elections was the citizen's constitutional right and, therefore, argued that they should not be seen to be dissuading citizens from participating in elections. Other problems that erupted pertained to the admission of Elias Lukwago, leader of the DP's splinter group, to the membership of TDA. Particularly, DP president Norbert Mao was not willing to accept the membership of Lukwago's group and threatened to walk out of TDA if the Summit decided to accept Lukwago's request. The conflict between Mao and Lukwago has had a direct impact on the internal condition of TDA. On the one hand, TDA needs the support of the DP while, on the other hand, the alliance is open to all parties and pressure groups promoting democracy and good governance. Owing to more urgent problems, such as agreeing on a joint presidential candidate (JPC) and finding ways out of the crisis, the membership of Lukwago's group was not the subject of further discussions anymore. Nevertheless, this showed how the instabilities within the member parties have severely affected the unity of the whole alliance.⁶⁸ In Robert Putnam's terms, this reflected the weak social capital of various opposition members within TDA.

The problem of weak social capital was most clearly reflected in the failure of TDA to agree on the joint

68 <http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/Lukwago-group-cannot-join-TDA--Mao/-/688334/2829372/-/11fu7nsz/-/index.html>.

presidential candidate. The selection criteria for a joint candidate are laid out in Article X of the Protocol of The Democratic Alliance. The NCC is responsible for ensuring a fair and transparent selection process. All parties and individuals should be given the same chance to be recognised as a joint candidate.⁶⁹ The selection of a JPC is coordinated by the NCC. In the TDA road map for the selection of joint candidates, the nomination phase should have been ended on 5 September, but the nomination deadline was extended several times.

One of the reasons for extending the nomination deadline could have been that there was only Professor Gilbert Bukenya, who had been nominated.⁷⁰ Another reason might be that the former prime minister, Amama Mbabazi – not a member of TDA at that time – asked the Summit for more time to deploy his supporters before joining TDA. One day after the deadline, Mbabazi was finally nominated to contest the JPC under TDA, which many claimed contradicted the rules. Besides, Professor Bukenya (independent) and the Hon. Amama Mbabazi (Go Forward pressure group representative), Norbert Mao (DP president) and Dr Kiiza Besigye (FDC presidential flag-bearer) had ambitions to be the JPC for TDA.⁷¹ After long discussions within the Summit, the members failed to agree on one JPC. Earlier on, Mao and Bukenya had withdrawn from the race for the JPC. Neither of the main candidates, Mbabazi and Besigye, agreed to step down for the other, and since the Protocol provided strict guidelines for agreeing on

69 The Democratic Alliance Protocol Article X.

70 <http://www.observer.ug/news-headlines/39740-mbabazi-besigye-divide-alliance>.

71 <http://observer.ug/news-headlines/39842-mbabazi-nominated-for-tda-joint-presidential-candidate>.

a candidate by consensus, the Summit was unable to choose a single candidate.

During the process, two factions around Mbabazi and Besigye were formed. While the CP and the FDC supported Besigye, the DP, Go Forward, the PPP, UFA and the UPC preferred Mbabazi as their presidential candidate. Bukenya decided to run for president independently and quit his support of TDA.⁷² Later on, he announced that he was going back to NRM to support President Museveni's bid for re-election – as NRM party flag-bearer – since he was the best candidate in the 2016 elections.⁷³ Bukenya's U-turn clearly shows how unstable the cohesion of the coalition is and that its members are ready to pull out as soon as difficulties arise.

Once they failed to agree on a joint presidential candidate for the 2016 elections, members of TDA went to Kenya to meet the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) leader, Raila Odinga, and other politicians. Mbabazi, Mao, former UPC leader Olara Otunnu and Besigye flew to Kenya with the aim of finding a way to agree on one joint candidate; or rather to run with two presidential candidates and learn from the Kenyan example how to unite opposition parties and pressure groups under one umbrella.⁷⁴ Although CORD failed to take power, which NRM members consistently emphasised when publicly discussing the value of that meeting, Kenya's opposition coalition,⁷⁵ the

National Rainbow Alliance (NARC), accomplished taking power in the past. The historical experience of Kenyan's opposition parties can be useful in avoiding the same mistakes and learning from its success story. Although there is almost nothing known about the content of the meeting, some sources reported that Odinga advised Mbabazi and Besigye to put the common TDA mission above their individual interests.⁷⁶

In another meeting held by both presidential aspirants (Mbabazi and Besigye) and representatives of TDA in London under the auspices of the Kofi Annan Foundation, the outcomes of the meeting were quite surprising and raised the question of whether the agreement, signed by Mbabazi and Besigye, will contribute to settlement of the power play between the two candidates. The document commits the opposing parties to agreeing on only one presidential candidate, which was the initial controversial issue. Just signing such an agreement does not help when neither candidate is willing to step down and support the other one in order to win power and form a transition government.⁷⁷ In fact, as recent developments show, both presidential aspirants have been officially nominated by the Uganda Electoral Commission and are actively campaigning across the country for president. Despite the current London agreement, it seems like TDA is following a strategy of allowing two candidates to run for president. Under the slogan 'One Campaign, One Message, One Winning Team',⁷⁸ TDA has tried to unite both factions within the alliance, which might endanger

72 <http://www.elections.co.ug/new-vision/election/1000779/analysis-political-parties-plan-post-tda>.

73 <http://www.newvision.co.ug/news/674310-bukenya-makes-u-turn-supports-museveni.html>.

74 <http://www.observer.ug/news-headlines/40269-tda-seeks-lessons-from-kenyan-alliances>.

75 <http://www.observer.ug/news-headlines/40336-officials-lash-out-at-odinga-after-nairobi-tda-meeting>.

76 Ibid.

77 <https://minbane.wordpress.com/2015/10/30/uganda-statement-of-principles-of-ugandans-committed-to-democratic-change-29-10-2015/>.

78 <https://www.facebook.com/TDAOfficial1/>.

TDA's mission to challenge the NRM government for power.

6.4 Why did TDA fail to agree on a joint presidential candidate

The analysis of Kenya and Cameroon has highlighted the centrality of securing cross-ethnic endorsements, particularly so in patronage-based politics. These endorsements, as indicated, are obtained not by selling the party ideology, though this is important, but by the ability of the coalition candidate to use financial resources to enhance the commitment of his potential contenders to the coalition as well as be able to reach out to known notables of various ethnic groups that are likely to swing the vote in his or her favour. This thus underscores the importance of mobilising the business community to contribute financial resources to the campaign, and also to participate in identifying, negotiating and securing cross-ethnic endorsements. Judging by the current precedent, TDA does not appear to have the backing of any section of Uganda's business community and neither does it have a strategy for mobilising business entrepreneurs.

Perhaps part of the reason lies in the fact that the business community has historically eschewed direct engagement in politics, albeit it being suggested that certain sections of the business community are in cahoots with the state. Since Uganda's business community is comprised of mainly Asians of Ugandan origin, their forceful expulsion in 1971 under then president Idi Amin appears to have left a sharp reminder of why business must never embitter the state agents. It is also possible that opposition political parties have not vigorously reached out to the business community – which partly explains their non-involvement in politics. Whatever the explanation

may be, what is critical to note is that TDA without the backing of Uganda's business community would not have much mileage, especially when financial resources are required to fund campaign investments and to persuade some cantankerous coalition partners to back the coalition with greater commitment.

7. Conclusion

The literature on PECS has demonstrated that politics in developing states need not be a zero-sum game. On the contrary, the paper has highlighted the possibilities of achieving democratic transition without necessarily triggering political instability. The paper contributes to the current literature by showing how financial liberalisation can produce varying outcomes in business development depending on the initial conditions that precede liberalisation. Financial liberalisation underpinned by the prior existence of a local capitalist class tends to enhance business development that, in the long run, creates a critical mass of autonomous entrepreneurs that may contribute positively to coalition-formation and a stable and sustainable democratic transition. On the other hand, financial liberalisation that is unsupported by the existence of a local capitalist class often reinforces an 'unholy alliance' between a poorly developed and weakly connected business community with the governing elites. This tends to impede the ability of the opposition to mobilise the business community, undermining the possibility of coalition-formation and democratic transition. These findings have important implications for the opposition political parties in Uganda that are currently involved in negotiations of forming a coalition to challenge the incumbent president in the upcoming 2016 general elections.

Significant attention might have to be paid to overcoming the constraints on mobilising the business class if a cohesive coalition and effective coordination of campaign strategies are to be achieved.

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Conflict and State Formation in South Sudan: The Logic of Oil Revenues in Influencing the Dynamics of Elite Bargains

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Abstract

In December 2013, a violent conflict broke out in South Sudan between former Vice-President Riek Machar's rebel-led faction, and President Salva Kiir's loyalists. Immediate explanations have attributed the mutiny to an internal power struggle between two dominant tribes: the Nuer and Dinka. This paper takes a political economy approach to examining the role of oil rents in contributing to the violent outbreak. Evidence appears to be two-fold: oil rents managed to forge an interregnum for constructive institutional building that partially contributed to the reintegration of various militia factions into the SPLA, which partly resulted in the attainment of South Sudan's independence in 2011. On the other hand, the perverse incentives that oil rents created, particularly with matching offers from the Khartoum government, occluded the ability of the top leadership of the SPLM/ SPLA to carry out the much-needed political reforms, thereby undermining the institutional foundation for peace, stability and good governance. The findings in this paper also suggest ways in which organisations like the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) can contribute towards the ongoing process of peace-building and institutional development in South Sudan.

1. Introduction

Conflict in South Sudan is not a recent phenomenon. Historians date the beginning of the Sudanese national movement in the 1920s with the formation of the anti-British White Brigade founded by two South Sudanese, Ali Abdalatif, a Dinka, and Abdalfadheel El Maz,

a Nuer.⁷⁹ Since then, scientific and anecdotal literature on South Sudan has denoted an unending and mostly violent struggle against the British colonial administration and, later on, its northern-based Arab successors, which buttressed a long-running civil war that has repeatedly taken ethnic turns within South Sudan itself.

South Sudan is a country endowed with significant deposits of natural resources. Given its possession of commercial quantities of oil and natural gas, gold, diamonds, iron ore, copper, among other minerals, the country is undoubtedly among the world's rich nations in terms of mineral wealth. However, in the midst of this great natural resource abundance also exists the world's poorest and most underdeveloped country. More than half of South Sudan's estimated 12 million people live below the poverty line, while the country's GDP as of 2014 was a paltry \$ 13.07 billion.⁸⁰ Thus, the world's newest state remains a juxtaposition of poverty and protracted social violence.

As a fragile state, South Sudan is characterised by a mixture of weak governance infrastructure, little or no service delivery, protracted social unrest and political violence, questions about regime legitimacy, inter-communal strife, food insecurity, economic

79 Mahmood Mamdani (2014). 'South Sudan: No power-sharing without political reform'. Article published in the New Vision newspaper of 18 February 2014.

80 Kamleu, G.B. & Mugisha, F. (2015). South Sudan country profile. Africa economic outlook. AfDB, OECD, UNDP .

despair, disputed border conflicts and targeted attacks.⁸¹ This makes South Sudan fitting of Paul Collier's description of countries in the 21st century but whose populations live in conditions akin to the 14th Century.⁸² There is hence a growing pile of charges against the South Sudan government based on views that it has failed to fulfil what are considered the four main functions of the state, namely: fostering an environment conducive to sustainable and equitable economic growth; establishing and maintaining legitimate, transparent and accountable political institutions; securing the population from violent conflict and controlling its territory; and meeting the basic human needs of the population.⁸³

Perchance, blaming the institutional weaknesses of South Sudan on its current government may be an injustice if the country's economic and political history is not taken into account. The country suffered two centuries of economic and political exploitation under Turko-Egyptian rule, British colonialism and North Sudan administration. The extractive nature of the relationship between the North and South Sudan left an indelible injury on the South from which the country is yet to heal. Through the dogged struggles by the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement (SPLM) led by Dr John Garang (RIP), the SPLM and the Government of Sudan signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. The CPA was meant

to put an end to the civil war and usher in a more equitable sharing of oil revenues. Shortly after the CPA was signed, South Sudan became an autonomous government and in 2011 got her independence. However, after just two years of independence, a violent conflict that erupted within the SPLM in the capital Juba and quickly spread out to all the states has cast doubt on the prospects for nation-building in the world's youngest nation.

This paper does not attempt to explain the historical causes of the civil war. Rather, it seeks to examine the role of oil revenues in shaping the dynamics of elite bargains. Specifically, the paper attempts to highlight how oil revenues, on the one hand, temporarily fostered the coalescing, from numerous factions, of the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) as a single organisation, and, on the other hand, obstructed the possibility of undertaking internal political reforms within the SPLA that largely accounted for the outbreak of violence.

The central argument of the paper is that, although oil provided the incentives among warring military elites to coalesce into a single organisation and thereby enhance their strength to demand an independent South Sudan, oil revenues at the same time created perverse incentives that forestalled the implementation of principled reconciliation and the much-needed political reforms, effectively undermining any possibility of creating institutions for good governance.

The paper begins by describing the background and providing a contextual understanding of the violent conflict that broke out on 15 December 2013. Building on the violence theory by North, Wallis, Weingast and Webb (henceforth

81 Maphosa, S.B. (2012). Natural resources and conflict: unlocking the economic dimension of peace-building in Africa. Policy Brief, Africa Institute of South Africa. Briefing, No.74.

82 Collier, P. (2007). *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.40

83 See Rice, S.E. & Patrick, S., 2008. *Index of state weakness in the developing world*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, p.3.

NWWW), we show how the incentives for rent extraction and distribution stimulated the dispersion of violence capacity among various military elites within South Sudan, which inhibited the possibility of undertaking political reform. We then demonstrate that even in the presence or availability of rents (which North and others point out as the glue that holds fragile political settlements together), higher levels of weak social capital, characterised by deep social mistrust among leading elites, can significantly undermine the capacity of rents to hold warring elites together, thus undermining the possibility of achieving political stability. The paper concludes with a discussion of the way forward for organisations like the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) in supporting constructive efforts to ensure peace, stability and good governance in South Sudan.

2. The 2013 Red December

On the night of 15 December 2013, fighting broke out within the SPLA between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and those loyal to former vice-president, Riek Machar.⁸⁴ The following day, President Salva Kiir, clad in a military uniform, addressed the nation and announced that there had been an attempted military coup d'état. He accused his former vice-president, Riek Machar, of being behind the attempted coup.⁸⁵ In turn, Machar, speaking from his hiding place, denied that he had been behind the insurrection or that there had been an attempted coup d'état at all, stating: 'There was no coup.'⁸⁶ What took place

in Juba was a misunderstanding between presidential guards within their division.⁸⁷ It was not a coup attempt. I have no connection with or knowledge of any coup attempt.' Although initially confined to Juba, the fighting subsequently spread to the states of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile. Rebel soldiers took control of the towns of Bor and Bentiu, and parts of Malakal, which they held for some time before troops loyal to the president brought them back under government control.

Eleven alleged coup plotters were arrested in their homes, but Riek Machar escaped from Juba, and, amid reports over the next few days of targeted killings of Nuer in Juba by men in uniform loyal to the president, the commanders of the 8th and 4th army divisions of the SPLA in Jonglei and Unity states announced their defection to Riek Machar and seized control of the state capitals of Bor and Bentiu. In telephone interviews from secure places Riek Machar denied that he had been involved in a coup but then urged the army to overthrow Salva Kiir and announced his plans to march on Juba.⁸⁸

The targeted killings in Juba were followed by revenge killings of Dinka by Nuer in Akobo and Bor in Jonglei state. The coup was said to have begun with a fight between Nuer and Dinka soldiers in the presidential guard following a meeting of the SPLM's National Liberation Council (NLC), which Riek Machar and the alleged plotters had boycotted, and in which Salva Kiir had denounced Riek Machar in strident terms.

While the forces said to be loyal to Riek Machar were drawn mainly from defecting garrisons in the three

Security Review, 23(4), 352-369.

⁸⁷ Johnson, D. H. (2014). Briefing: The crisis in South Sudan. *African Affairs*, 113(451), 300-309

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Apuuli, K. P. (2014). Explaining the (il) legality of Uganda's intervention in the current South Sudan conflict. *African Security Review*, 23(4), 352-369.

⁸⁵ Johnson, D. H. (2014). Briefing: The crisis in South Sudan. *African Affairs*, 113(451), 300-309.

⁸⁶ Apuuli, K. P. (2014). Explaining the (il) legality of Uganda's intervention in the current South Sudan conflict. *African*

states and some armed civilian Nuer groups from Jonglei, the government received military support from Uganda, as well as the SPLA-North and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) forces in rebellion against Khartoum in neighbouring Blue Nile and South Kordofan states.

International pressure on both the government and dissidents resulted in an IGAD-brokered cessation of hostilities agreement in Addis Ababa on 23 January, but this proved to be an agreement on paper only, with no immediate provision for monitoring on the ground.⁸⁹

By the beginning of February 2014 nearly 750,000 persons were estimated to have been displaced by the fighting in Juba and the three states; 85,200 were seeking refuge in the compounds of the UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS); and over 130,000 were estimated to have fled into neighbouring countries, including (North) Sudan.⁹⁰ Estimates of deaths have varied wildly from 1,000 to 100,000.

Some have argued that two parallel conflicts have been developing since 2005 that have now converged: one in the governing party, the SPLM, and one in the army, the SPLA. Both have their origins in the unresolved tensions following the split in the SPLA in the 1990s, and the incomplete reintegration of anti-SPLA forces into the SPLA after 2005, largely animated by perverse incentives.⁹¹

89 Phillip Apuuli, K. (2015). IGAD's mediation in the current South Sudan conflict: Prospects and challenges. *African Security*, 8(2), 120-145.

90 USAID, 'USAID-DCHA South Sudan crisis fact sheet #24'. 4 February 2014, <<http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/02.04.14%20-%20USAID-DCHA%20South%20Sudan%20Crisis%20Fact%20Sheet%20%2324.pdf>> (6 February 2014).

91 Johnson, D. H. (2014). Briefing: The crisis in South Sudan. *African Affairs*, 113(451), 300-309.

3. SPLA/M formation and the challenges of building internal cohesion

The South Sudan state formation process has always made progressive steps every time the Nuer and Dinka collaborate, which is why recent arguments that have attributed the recent violence to ethnic divisions, particularly between the Dinka and Nuer, must be called into question.⁹² South Sudan is a multi-ethnic society, no ethnic group constitutes a majority, but the Dinka and the Nuer make up 4.8 million or 57 per cent of South Sudan's population between them.⁹³ With 3.2 million Dinka and 1.6 million Nuer, the Dinka outnumber the Nuer by a factor of two to one. Dinka exist in seven out of 10 south Sudan states, with the majority being found in Northern Bahr-el-Ghazal, Warrap and Lakes states. The Nuer live mainly in Unity, Upper Nile, and Jonglei states. The two ethnic groups share a common culture, have similar languages, mostly share the same spiritual beliefs and practise an agro-pastoralist economy. Finally, the relations between Dinka and Nuer were not just marked by competition and rivalry but also unity and cooperation. It is, for instance, historically evident that the Dinka and Nuer have always come together to fight for a common cause.⁹⁴ Moreover, during the outbreak of the fighting in Juba many of the people targeted by the uniformed units were protected by their neighbours – Dinka protecting Nuer, Dinka and Nuer combining to patrol their neighbourhoods, people from other groups protecting both Nuer and Dinka. The tribalism argument is, therefore, unpersuasive. So how then can we explain this violent outbreak?

92 Mahmood Mamdani (2014). 'South Sudan: No power-sharing without political reform', Article published in the *New Vision* of 18 February 2014.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

Mamdani (2014) argues that the seeds of the current violent conflict are traceable to the formation of the SPLA/M in 1983. The quest for South Sudanese freedom relied on the broad-base mobilisation by ambitious leaders but which generated two problematic features that sowed the seeds for violent internal struggle for political power: first, parity of community (ethnic) representation in the new structure of power, and second, different views on the direction in which that power would move. And along this path, Mamdani asserts, there have been several bloody splits, of which the December 2013 bloody split was just the third of the several previous bloody splits.

The first bloody split happened in the very early stages of the founding of SPLM (1984-85) and resulted from disagreement over the direction of the struggle. One side, led by Samuel Gai Tut Yang (Nuer) and Akuot Atem Mayen (Dinka), called for an independent South Sudan (a continuation of Anyanya as Anyanya II), while the other side, supported by John Garang (Dinka), Kerubino Kuanyin Bol (Dinka) and William Nyuon Bany (Nuer) called for a 'New Sudan'. Each side drew support from across ethnic boundaries.⁹⁵

The second bloody split came in 1991 when Lam Akol, a senior SPLA commander in Upper Nile, linked up with Riek Machar, another senior commander with a base in Nasir along the Ethiopian border, called for the replacement of Garang as leader of SPLA, claiming that he had tied SPLA too closely to the government of Mengistu Haile Mariam in Ethiopia in exchange for Ethiopian support which he had used to occlude internal reform.⁹⁶ This time, too, the rebel call combined an unyielding

ideological commitment (dedication to an independent South) with demands for internal reform. In spite of the wide support for rebel demands, SPLA ranks were divided on whether or not it was necessary to remove John Garang. When the rebels proved unsuccessful, they formed a break-away faction called SPLM-Nasir under the leadership of Machar.

The disagreement in 1991 led to several splits within SPLA following the Bor massacre that same year in which it is said around 2,000 Dinka civilians were slaughtered by Machar's forces.⁹⁷ Broad-based before the Bor massacre, the Nasir group attenuated into a more or less exclusive Nuer affair after the spilling of blood. The Nasir faction renamed itself the South Sudan Independence Movement (SSIM) in the years that followed and in 1997 signed the Khartoum Peace Agreement (KPA) with the Sudan government. Other groups joined, including the SPLA/M-United of Lam Akol, the Equatoria Defence Force (EDF) and Kerubino Kuanyin Bol's own SPLA/M. The collaboration that followed made it possible for the Sudan government to pump oil from the South Sudan fields in Unity and Upper Nile, but it also turned out to be an interlude.

4. Oil – 'the bread and butter' of South Sudan

South Sudan has the third largest oil reserves in sub-Saharan Africa. As of January 2014, the country had 3.5 billion barrels of proved oil reserves.⁹⁸ After independence in 2011, South Sudan inherited an oil sector which was already limping. This was caused by a number of reasons, for example, the earlier points of contention between northern and southern Sudan,

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Johnson, D. H. (2014). Briefing: The crisis in South Sudan. *African Affairs*, 113(451), 300-309.

⁹⁷ Mahmood Mamdani (2014). South Sudan: No power-sharing without political reform.

⁹⁸ *The Oil and Gas Journal* (2014).

such as the sharing of oil revenues and border conflict,⁹⁹ limited or non-existing infrastructures like refineries, pipelines, roads, rails and ports to facilitate effective and efficient production, value addition and transportation etc. In fact, since South Sudan is a landlord locked country, she still has to depend on Sudan's ports, refineries and pipelines to conduct oil businesses. Besides, the oil companies have the biggest stakes in the country's oil wealth and there are already complains about the suspect transparency of these companies. For instance, in 2011, the chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Petroleum and Mining succinctly complained that 'even after independence, we don't know how much oil there is. There is no transparency in the process of oil extraction. It is only the oil companies that know the quantities of oil produced and it's the same companies that provide government with data about oil extraction and production.'¹⁰⁰

Amidst all the challenges faced by South Sudan's oil sector, the country's economy is still purely oil-dependent. To understand the magnitude of this dependence, oil production accounted for 99 per cent of the country's exports, 95 per cent of government revenue and about one-half of the GDP¹⁰¹ in 2014. However, unlike in other African countries such as Botswana where natural resource wealth led to institutional reforms that sparked

socio-economic transformation,¹⁰² South Sudan's oil wealth presents a classic opposing case. Oil in South Sudan has bred corruption as government officials embezzled most of the revenues and deposited them in banks in foreign countries.¹⁰³ Similarly, the government has underinvested in the agriculture and service sectors owing to oil revenues coming in, showing the classic feature of the Dutch disease.¹⁰⁴

Since the outbreak of conflict in 2013, oil revenues have been diverted to finance the war, and there is a real risk that multi-million dollar payments made by companies to secure future projects will also fail to reach the development budget.¹⁰⁵ Worryingly, the country continues to be ensnared in a gigantic debt trap as it borrows money from oil companies to conduct government business. In the 2014/15 financial year, for instance, the government borrowed up to £1 billion from oil companies to finance her budget. About 35 per cent was directed to security and defense, while only 12 per cent of the budget was invested in healthcare, infrastructure and education combined.¹⁰⁶

The oil sector has also had its fair share of the devastation. The most striking blow is the massive withdrawal of investments. As of July 2015, oil production in South Sudan had reduced from 250,000 to 160,000 barrels per day since the conflict began.¹⁰⁷ The slowdown in production was mainly due to loss of investor confidence, property

99 Shankleman, J. (2011). Oil and state building in South Sudan – New country, old industry. *Special Report 282, July*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

100 Elke, G. and Christine, A. (2014). Oil Investment and Conflict in Upper Nile State, South Sudan brief 48

101 Kamleu, G.B. & Mugisha, F. (2015). *South Sudan country profile. Africa economic outlook*. AfDB, OECD, UNDP.

102 Acemoglu, D, Robinson, J., Johnson, S. (2001). *An African success story: Botswana*. MIT Press.

103 Wel, P (2012). 'Viewpoint: South Sudan has not lived up to the hype'. BBC world News.

104 Elke, G. & Christine, A. (2014). Oil Investment and Conflict in Upper Nile State, South Sudan brief 48.

105 Ibid.

106 South Sudan National Budget 2014/15

107 GlobalData (2015)

destruction and fear, which is leading to the massive shutdown of oil fields.

5 Reintegration, signing of the CPA and the role of oil revenues in elite bargains

The SPLA never recovered completely from the split in the 1990s, led by Riek Machar, Lam Akol, and others. The split particularly resulted in a proliferation of militia groups with support from the Khartoum government; it also led to the militarisation of local defence as local communities sought to protect themselves from marauding militia groups.¹⁰⁸ Specifically, Jonglei state had been a recruiting ground for anti-SPLA militias by Khartoum, especially among the Murle of Pibor County, who had a history of hostile relations with neighbouring Dinka, Lou Nuer and Anuak. Many Nuer civilian groups also armed themselves, less for fighting the SPLA and more for protecting themselves from their similarly armed neighbours. The so-called 'White Army' of 1991 became notorious for their involvement in the Bor Massacre of that year in collaboration with regular units of Riek Machar's faction of the SPLM. Their name derived from the fact that they were not a uniformed force and were regularly armed.¹⁰⁹ During this time the Khartoum government supported various anti-SPLA factions with arms and money.

However, in the run-up to the CPA, some of the dissident leaders, such as Riek Machar, Taban Deng Gai and Lam Akol, returned to the SPLM/A before 2002 and were reincorporated into the party. Several other groups were also reintegrated into the SPLA/M. Most of these Khartoum-backed militias, who were largely recruited from different Nuer groups

in Unity, Upper Nile and Jonglei states were brought back into the SPLA – but incompletely integrated there. Their leaders were promoted, but rank-and-file troops were not absorbed into other units.¹¹⁰ The last group to be reintegrated into the SPLA was eventually absorbed into the SPLA/M in 2006. Analysts have argued that the integration of SSDF presented the biggest challenge to the integrity of the SPLA. Mamdani, for example, points out that, like the SPLA, the SSDF was an umbrella military formation. With the ageing Matieb appointed deputy commander of the SPLA, other former SSDF commanders, such as Peter Yak Gatdet, Gordon Kong Chuol and others, became generals in the SPLA, and turned its front office into a revolving door that made possible interminable cycles of mutiny and 'unprincipled' pardon. The post-bloody split reconciliation process has always turned out to be a sham masked with the absence of a political reform strategy. The SPLA became a coalition of ethnic militias, each loyal to its own set of militia leaders.¹¹¹

Since 2006, and more recently since 2011 (throughout the Interim Period) there were repeated defections to Khartoum and re-defections to the SPLA, and often defectors returned with enhanced ranks. This spurt of events begs the question: Why were there defections and re-defections? What were the incentives that underpinned this behaviour?

NWWW, in their seminal text, *In the Shadow of Violence: Politics, Economics and the Problems of Development*, have argued that in underdeveloped states, violence capacity is often dispersed among leading elites – call them leaders. And in the context of limited access to opportunities, these elites use

108 Johnson, D. H. (2014). Briefing: The crisis in South Sudan. *African Affairs*, 113(451), 300-309.

109 Ibid.

110 Ibid.

111 Mamdani 2014.

their organisations and violence capacity as instruments for extracting rents. However, continued fighting, NWWW observe, is often perceived by contending elites as counterproductive to rent extraction and distribution.¹¹² More often these elites will enter into bargain – call it political settlement – in which they agree to ‘divide’ scarce land, labour, capital and opportunities among themselves and ‘agree to enforce each leader’s privileged access to their resources.’ Therefore, within this context, rents are central to overcoming the problem of violence among competing elites. And, at the same time, violence is considered as the means through which resources are allocated among various individuals and groups of elites. Elite organisations exist with the primary motivation of enhancing their violence capacity in order to: first, safeguard their economic interests; and second, to structure relationships among elites in order to coordinate rent extraction and distribution and also to manage violence with the organisation.¹¹³

In the context of South Sudan, the 1990s split can be said to have been motivated by the disagreement over rents albeit dominant arguments have cited failure of the top leadership to accede to reforms. This is especially so because in the wake of the split, the Nasir faction, led by Riek Machar, entered into the Khartoum Peace Agreement (KAP) with the Khartoum government for military support in exchange for access to the oil fields in the Upper Nile. The split, as we know it, triggered a proliferation of militia factions, all with the primary incentive of access to rents or support, both financial

and military, from the northern government.

During the negotiation of the CPA and the subsequent reintegration of break-away factions into the SPLA, we see an ‘unprincipled’ reintegration that eschewed confronting the political and ideological questions of the 1990s that had resulted in the bloody split. Instead, many militia leaders were elevated to top positions within the SPLA that came with access to certain rents. Riek Machar, Peter Gatdet, Amatieb and others became generals within the SPLA. But with matching rent offers from the Khartoum government, any slight disagreements within the SPLA triggered defections and reintegration into the SPLA by the same offers. Peter Gatdet, for example, became known as a serial defector both before and after 2005. Those who never broke away sometimes felt that preferential treatment had been given to those who did, and that rebels were being rewarded for their rebellion. That character of the army changed even more with the dismissal of some of the more stalwart veteran SPLA officers in 2013.¹¹⁴

Specifically, the reintegration of various militias into the army had profound consequences for the structure of the SPLA, with catastrophic repercussions for the military budget. It resulted in ballooning of the SPLA. Guy Lamb, a senior researcher at South Africa’s Institute of Security Studies, estimated the SPLA’s current strength at approximately 194,000 but warned that it would continue to rise as long as additional South Sudanese soldiers from various external forces were being integrated into it. In fact, owing to the growth of the militia factions, in the mid-2000s, the donor community proposed a solution to the problem

¹¹²North, D. C., Wallis, J. J., Webb, S. B., & Weingast, B. R. (Eds.). (2012). *In the shadow of violence: Politics, economics, and the problems of development*. Cambridge University Press.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴Mamdani 2014.

through the demobilisation and disarmament programme (DDR), a two-year programme that targeted 90,000 ex-combatants at a cost of \$ 55 million but which later could only boast of netting some 12,000 by 2012.¹¹⁵

After being cut down to size, leaders of militias and their groups were absorbed into the army, given amnesty and ranks that came with access to state resources, mainly oil revenues. Regardless of how many times they defected, whether after months or years, the government continued to apply the same medicine to the militia problem and with the same result: more defections, and more integration.¹¹⁶

The disarmament programme involved paying the lowest ranked soldier in the army about \$140 a month, the military standard of living was much higher than that of civilians, most of whom live on less than \$1 a day. Therefore, demobilising soldiers from the military, Mamdani argues, was akin to integrating them into poverty. Understandably many resisted and others regrouped into militias, which would again be followed by a reintegration process. For example, in Jonglei province, David Yau Yau, a leader of the Murle group, was granted a presidential amnesty in 2012, and the rank of general in the army. A few months later, in April 2012, he gave up his post and resumed rebellion. Yau Yau's rebellion attracted both Murle and Nuer youths and, as result, in a 1 September 2012 letter to Deputy Defence Minister, Majak D'Agoot, elders and other Murle community leaders reasoned that the disarmament operation should stop because it was 'the main reason' youth were joining David Yau Yau.¹¹⁷

Thus, the amnesty programme had turned into a massive pay-out of the mainly oil revenue-funded national budget as a way to retain the loyalty of commanders. South African sources estimate that over 50 per cent of the government's budget was going into paying the armed forces before the 15 December, 2013 break out of the fighting. The government's wage bill, they told IRIN, accounted for about 80 per cent of the military budget. Such perverse incentives underpinned the relationship among military elites within the SPLA and oil revenues were used as the means for holding war-mongering military elites together. When oil production stopped two years prior to the outbreak of conflict, the government could no longer sustain the amnesty budget. Internal pressure grew for political reform, forcing a division of camps between those who demanded political reform and those who opposed it. With historical internal factions within the SPLA, a violent conflict was inevitable from this context.¹¹⁸

6. Conclusion and way forward for peace and stability in South Sudan

Classical literature on the linkage between natural resources and institution-building often posits that resources, especially in developing states, tend to weaken the capacity of building strong institutions for good governance.¹¹⁹ This is premised on the argument that resources tend to encourage rent-seeking behaviour, corruption and bribery, which can potentially fuel conflicts and political instability, and thus the famous *resource curse* discourse.¹²⁰ However,

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Humphreys, M., Sachs, J., & Stiglitz, J. E. (Eds.). (2007); Sala-i-Martin, X., & Subramanian, A. (2003); Frankel, J. A. (2010); Ross, M. (2003); Mehlum, H., Moene, K., & Torvik, R. (2006).

¹²⁰ Mehlum, H., Moene, K., & Torvik, R. (2006); Ross, M. (2003).

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

very rarely has the literature helped us to properly conceptualise how oil rents exactly undermine institutional development. There are cases where oil rents have fuelled sporadic growth and development even in weak states, as was the case in Venezuela in the 1960s and 70s,¹²¹ and in other cases where they have indeed undermined institutions and development, as was the case in the same country from the 1980s onwards.¹²²

Discounting the importance of analysing the underlying context in which oil rents operate to shape institutional trajectories might naively lead us to make the reigning and unhelpful 'resource curse' conclusions, thereby losing the opportunity for a policy response.

This paper has shown that oil rents have shaped the current political crisis in South Sudan in two ways. On the one hand, they have managed to bring warring factions with problematic historical social capital issues – particularly exacerbated after the 1991 SPLA split – under one umbrella organisation. This has eventually galvanised their efforts, leading to the signing of the CPA in 2005 and ultimately the attainment of independence by South Sudan. On the other hand, oil rents, particularly with matching offers from the Khartoum government, can be seen to have inhibited the process of constructive internal dialogue within the SPLA and subsequently created a very strong incentive for militia formation with a view to maximising rents. This has weakened the ability of elites within the SPLA to forge stable political settlements, attenuated state capacity and consequently heightened violence

121 Di John, J. (2009). *From windfall to curse? Oil and industrialization in Venezuela, 1920 to the present*. Penn State Press.

122 Ibid.

in South Sudan. What, then, is the prospect for peace and stability in South Sudan? Particularly, what role can organisations like the KAS play in fostering peace and stability?

Prospects for resolving the current conflict will depend on international actors behaving responsibly, and a number of other factors. We ought to note, however, that some key leaders' track records are not very encouraging and that their involvement in the peace-building process should thus be strategically managed. Riek Machar's track record, for example, is not encouraging. In the 1990s, he collaborated with Khartoum from the start of his rebellion against Garang, while holding to an unrealistic hope that his public advocacy of human rights and democracy would gain him the support of western governments, such as the United States. At the beginning of this conflict he offered to share oil revenues with Khartoum, in a crude attempt to get their support. So far he has been rebuffed.¹²³ In the 1990s, as now, he quickly lost control of troops on the ground. In 1991 he dismissed the loss of civilian life as 'regrettable', while he has excused civilian deaths as something that happens in war. Now, as in the 1990s, he has carried on his armed war against the SPLA long after it has any chance of success, and people within his camp admit that they are trying to find an international 'godfather' to supply them with heavy weapons. Moreover, the scale of civilian deaths will have to be addressed if any peace settlement is to have a chance of producing lasting reconciliation. Yet both sides are culpable and neither leader is willing to take responsibility.¹²⁴

The issues of governance highlighted by this conflict are not just internal

123 Johnson, D. H. (2014). Briefing: The crisis in South Sudan. *African Affairs*, 113(451), 300-309.

124 Ibid.

to the SPLM, and there is potential for opening up space for other voices to be heard and other groups to become involved in resolving the underlying issues that led to the conflict. Already, organisations such as the South Sudan Law Society, the Association for Media Development in South Sudan, local think-tanks such as the Sudd Institute, as well as numerous diaspora groups have been putting forward their analyses and proposals. Such organisations offer critical opportunities for the KAS to support amplified citizen engagement in the peace-building process by strengthening the voice to touch various echelons of society.

Of vital importance to the fate of the recently concluded negotiations in Ethiopia is the inclusion of some of the released detainees as a third voice. They have distanced themselves from Riek Machar and the destruction caused by his forces. They have declared that they will remain separate from Riek Machar's delegation, because they have no forces of their own, though they do share many of their political concerns. If these civilian groups become part of a formula for resolving the conflict, this will make it harder for Riek and his allied commanders to stay aloof and continue their insurgency.

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The Crossover: Exploring the Party Identification Paradox in Uganda's Multiparty Politics

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Abstract

Under Uganda's current nascent multiparty political framework, party identification and loyalty remain precarious. Crossing over from one political party to another is a common occurrence among both the political elites and the vast majority of citizens. The logic of party crossovers is that it strengthens the receiving side, while weakening the abandoned side. The party identification crisis in Uganda started shortly before independence and it continues to-date. What explains these crossovers? This paper explores the historical narratives and provides a comprehensive theoretical background of party identification in Uganda. It shows that even if the Michigan school of thought and the rational choice theory offer a clearer analytical perspective, it is still inadequate to explain Uganda's party identification crisis. The paper presents another theoretical framework which considers partisans as individuals in search of economic opportunities.

1. Introduction

In many developed countries, most citizens identify themselves with political parties which extol their individual virtues and support their interests in policy formulation, implementation and service delivery. It is, therefore, very common to find Americans subscribing to either

the Democratic or the Republican Party and the British who are proud enthusiasts of either the Labour or the Conservative Party. Needless to say, there has of course been an increase in independent citizens who belong to neither side of the political spectrum.¹²⁷

In many African countries, political party identification was a strong symbol of nationalism during the post-colonial struggle and shortly after independence. The political parties which led anti-colonial and liberation struggles, such as the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) in Uganda, Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) in Tanganyika, the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, and the Convention People's Party (CPP) in Ghana, to mention but a few, automatically or easily won the loyalty and support of the majority of the citizenry. This thus enabled such political parties to easily evolve into giant political organisations because of the loyalty accorded to them for leading the liberation struggles. After independence, the rise of opposing political groups, militarism and coups d'état changed the political landscape and party identity in Africa.

In Uganda, the party identification crisis started shortly before the country's independence in 1962 when the Uganda National Congress (UNC) and Uganda Peoples' Union (UPU) merged to form the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). It continued during the Obote I government when there were massive crossovers to the UPC from the DP and *Kabaka Yekka* party. After the complete destruction of political participation from 1971-79, Amin's dictatorship was toppled,

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127 Wilson, Q., & Dilulio Jr, J. (1995). *How American Government Works*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

and the Obote II government created some democratic window of opportunity. As multipartism revived, party identification became more intricate as increasing numbers of Ugandans got confused about where to place their political loyalty. The resultant effect was increasing crossovers between parties. This was evidenced in the 1980 elections where new parties emerged to lure recruits while old parties merged to widen their political capital.

The political disorders and NRA guerrilla struggles between 1981 and 1985 stifled Uganda's democratic apparatus and this problem was further exacerbated in 1986 when President Museveni declared Uganda a one-party state. After running Uganda for ten years as a one-party state, the NRM government promulgated the 1995 constitution, which in part started 'sweeping the road' for the return of multiparty politics. In 2005, a national referendum ushered in a more robust space for multiparty political engagement. As a result, political elites and citizens have formed, joined and crisscrossed between different political parties in a purported quest for better democratic space and good governance.

This paper, thus, does not only explain the historical perspectives and context of party identity in Uganda but it also seeks to examine the role of rents in shaping the dynamics of elites' and citizens' loyalty to a given political party. Specifically, the paper attempts to highlight how and why political parties which are dominant, powerful, richer and/or ruling or are perceived to be so are able to attract greater allegiance and support from political elites and the citizens. The fundamental argument of the paper is that party identity in Uganda is to a very large extent determined by the need to survive and build/widen clientelistic networks. As

such, political agents are always in a continuous rents *shopping spree* from political parties.

The paper starts with an outline of historical narratives of party identity crisis in Uganda by explicitly analysing the dynamics of the four major political parties in Uganda, i.e. the Uganda People's Party (UPC), the Democratic Party (DP), the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC). Building on sociological and psychological attachment party identity theory by Campbell *et al.* (1960), and Converse (1969), the rational choice and issue-based theory by Harrop and Miller (1987), etc, we present and explain the logic the party identity crisis in Uganda. Building on the rational choice theory, we offer a theoretical framework to expound on the party identification question in Uganda using the political clientelism and rent-seeking school of thought. The paper concludes by providing relevant recommendations to key stakeholders involved in promoting democracy and good governance in Uganda in particular and in Africa at large.

2. What is party identification?

Party identification is a stance that people take towards political parties.¹²⁸ Simply put, it is the act of paying allegiance and loyalty to a political party that one identifies him/herself with. This identification is exercised through voting for the party during elections and/or offering physical, financial and moral support to the party's initiatives such as campaigns, community outreach, and businesses, among others. When political parties provide their followers with a stable and distinctive

128 Zuckerman, A.S. * & Brynin, M. (2001). *A decision heuristic for party identification: New British and German data and a new understanding for a classic concept.*

set of ideas and goals (symbols) that anchor their expectations about democracy, orient them in a general way towards policy options, and make them feel part of the process of collective choice, party loyalty and affiliation increase.¹²⁹

Party identification is thus shaped by a plethora of socio-cultural, geographical, economic and political variables. Generally, both objective factors that cut across a population and subjectively held sentiments determine the pattern of voting and the choices made in an electoral contest. The former may entail, among other things, the socio-economic status of the voters and their ideological persuasion while the latter may take on more sectarian considerations such as race, ethnicity, religion etc.¹³⁰ In Uganda, party identification is a subject of contentious debate as only a few political elites and citizens remain loyal while for the majority, crisscrossing from one party to the next is common.

This begs a fundamental question: Why do some people remain loyal to a specific political party, while for others, partisanship is precarious? The next section answers this question by providing the historical perspectives and the dynamics of party identification within the four major political parties in Uganda, i.e. the UPC, DP, NRM and FDC.

2.1 The rise and fall of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC)

On 9 March 1960, Dr Apollo Milton Obote and W.W. Rwetsiba announced the formation of the UPC after a merger of Uganda Peoples' Union (UPU) and the Uganda National

Congress (UNC). The party soon became a nationalistic movement and after independence in 1962 emerged as a formidable political organisation. Amidst pressure from the Buganda kingdom and other political establishments, such as *Kabaka Yekka*, the UPC offered assurances and hope and Uganda's socio-economic indicators improved. The government pursued a policy of *Ugandanisation* and a number of individuals began to receive good wage, which saw vast improvements in their standards of living.¹³¹ As a result, the UPC gained the loyalty and support of a considerable portion of Uganda's populace.

However, the 1966 Crisis undid many of those achievements. After the crisis, Uganda underwent a 'revolution' in which Obote, then prime minister, purged his own UPC of some of its top leaders, overthrew the president, who was also the king (*kabaka*) of Buganda, and rewrote the constitution to centralise power in his own hands.¹³² For the first time the structural bottlenecks to the UPC were weakened, albeit for a short time but to the detriment of the UPC's future. This was done, however, at the cost of: (i) alienating the Baganda, the largest and most economically and educationally advanced ethnic group; (ii) bringing the army into the political arena, in effect making it the arbiter of political power; and (iii) bringing into play various instruments of political coercion, including detention and emergency regulations, which militated against genuine political activity of any kind.¹³³ By 1967, most of the prominent opposition members of parliament from the DP and KY had either been imprisoned

129Schmitter (2001). Parties are not what they once were.

130 Bwana, C. (2009). Voting patterns in Uganda's elections: Could it be the end of the National Resistance Movement's (NRM) domination in Uganda's politics?

131 Kayizzi & Arne (1999). Is Uganda an emerging economy? *A report for the OECD project 'Emerging Africa'*.

132 Uzoigwe 1983.

133 Cohen, D. L. & Parson, J. (2008). *The Uganda People's Congress branch and constituency elections of 1970*

or bribed to cross the floor.¹³⁴ It is, therefore, not surprising that when the general elections were held in January 1970, the UPC's performance plummeted because of problems such as deep tribal divisions, low popular participation, and excessive dominance by a few powerful elites.¹³⁵

The UPC's downfall became glaring in the 1971 coup led by Idi Amin Dada. When Obote was deposed, Uganda was thrown under Amin's tyranny and dictatorship, which completely withered the democratic space. The 1979 Uganda National Liberation Front's (UNFL) triumphal defeat of Amin's dictatorship and subsequent comeback of the UPC did not revive the party. In fact, the various attempts under the Obote II government to resuscitate the UPC hit a dead end as the *burning hunger* among national elites to have a slice of the political 'cake' increased. This was evident in the 1980 general elections where the UPC won but was accused of massive rigging and copious electoral malpractices. Overwhelmed by multiple political and guerrilla pressures, the UPC was further weakened, culminating in the 1985 coup d'état masterminded by General Tito Okello that drove the last nail in the coffin of Obote's second administration. The December 1985 Nairobi Peace Talks – otherwise also derided as the 'Nairobi Peace Jokes' – between the military government of Tito Okello and the National Resistance Army (NRA) gave the latter legroom to reorganise and emerge as a stronger political movement.¹³⁶ In January 1986, Yoweri Museveni took over power and banned political parties, injuring the UPC even more. The NRA/M kept growing and gaining more political support to the detriment of the UPC and other

political parties whose abilities to regenerate, organise and strategise were severely choked.

As an exile in Zambia, Obote continued to be critical of Museveni's government but succumbed to kidney failure in October 2005, just three months after the rebirth of multiparty politics in Uganda. The new referendum once again gave the UPC an opportunity to start active engagement in political organising. This time around, however, many complex challenges bedevilled the party. For example, the intermittent wrangles ensued over party leadership and property ownership. When Jimmy Akena (the late President Obote's son) competed with Olara Otunnu to replace Miria Obote (his mother and Obote's widow) as president of the party, there were accusations that the party had been turned into a family dynasty. This undoubtedly cost UPC her loyal partisans, including in the Lango sub-region where it had massive and sympathetic support. Otunnu won the party elections and there was a slim ray of hope that his presidency would restore the party's past glory, but alas, increasing wrangles between factions loyal to Jimmy Akena and Otunnu caused more schism within the party.¹³⁷ Otunnu's critics, however, blamed him for being one of the chief plotters of the 1985 coup that led to the UPC's downfall. In July 2015, Jimmy Akena won the disputed UPC presidential elections, but Otunnu refused to accept defeat, causing more divisions within the party.

In addition to internal organisational pitfalls, the UPC still remains a sentimentally Lango tribal party with very low national partisan appeal. With only 11 members of parliament, all of whom hail from the Lango sub-

¹³⁴Uzoigwe 1983.

¹³⁵Cohen, D. L. & Parson, J. (2008). The Uganda people's congress branch and constituency elections of 1970.

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Kalyegvera, T. (2015). The end of old parties. *The Daily Monitor* newspaper article.

region, the party is deeply suffering from political identity syndrome and the likelihood of its recovery is rather unpredictable.

2.2 The struggles and stagnation of the Democratic Party (DP)

On 6 October 1954, the Democratic Party (DP) was founded by seven fervent Catholics/political activists and it today occupies a reputable position as Uganda's first and Africa's second oldest political party. The DP, under Ben Kiwanuka (RIP), led Uganda to internal self-government in 1961. This was, however, cut short in 1962 with the approval of the Independence Constitution in London and the Buganda kingdom's decision to front the *kabaka* as the president of Uganda. Earlier that year, Obote and Buganda had formed an alliance and the UPC won majority votes in parliament, making Obote the executive prime minister and *Kabaka* Edward Mutesa the ceremonial president. The DP struggles began when 19 out of 24 DP MPs decided to cross over to the UPC.¹³⁸

The 1966 Crisis and the 1971 coup d'état weakened the UPC and there was another great trek away from the once formidable party. The return of multipartyism after Amin's tyranny thus gave the DP another platform to reorganise and in December 1980, the party won the general elections with 75 seats out of 108. Unfortunately, the Electoral Commissioner, Paul Muwanga, under pressure from the Tanzanian government, awarded victory to Obote's UPC.¹³⁹ This disenfranchisement led many DP loyalists to support the NRA guerrilla warfare and when the rebels

captured power in 1986, thousands of DP elites and loyalists crossed over to the NRM/A since political parties had been banned. The former DP leader, Paul Ssemogerere, became a cabinet minister and several other party leaders became senior NRM government officials in various capacities. The Foundation for African Development (FAD) was founded by DP elites as a local NGO and used by the party as a channel of political communication with the grass roots.

After the promulgation of the new constitution in 1995 which in part promoted 'merit-based politics' or the so-called 'movement democracy', Paul Ssemogerere contested against President Museveni in the first ever democratic elections held under the NRM administration. Though Ssemogerere lost in the elections, they restored some hope among DP party loyalists, and after the 2005 referendum, the nationwide revival campaigns began and the party fronted presidential candidates in the subsequent national elections. However, just like in the 2006 general elections when the DP's John Sebaana Kizito lost in the presidential elections, Norbert Mao suffered the same fate in 2011. In 2015, the DP did not front a presidential candidate for the general elections in 2016 but, instead, a faction of the party headed by President Norbert Mao joined the Go Forward team of Amama Mbabazi, a former prime minister and secretary general of the NRM and now a presidential candidate.

Overall, the DP's strength is still concentrated in the Buganda sub-region where three-quarters of the DP 15 MPs originate from. The party's organisational capacity weaknesses, evident in the internal fights and factions, will continue limiting its ability to garner a nationwide party identity and support.

¹³⁸Karoli Ssemogerere (2014). Uganda is 52 Democratic Party is 60: Reflections from Mzee Byanyima. *The Independent Magazine*.

¹³⁹Kagwa Kavuma (2014). 60 years of the Democratic Party. *Independent Magazine*.

2.3 The rise of the National Resistance Movement (NRM)

In January 1986, Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) finally took power in Uganda and formally established what it claimed was a new type of democracy, which soon came to be known as 'movement' or 'no-party' democracy.¹⁴⁰ The foundation of Uganda's 'no-party democracy' is the principle of what is called 'individual-merit politics'. The latter was articulated by the NRM leadership as a reaction to a post-independence history of sectarian and ethnic conflict-prone political parties, the alleged cause of sequential patterns of ethnic exclusion, political violence and chronic instability. The 'individual-merit' reform aimed at transforming politics – and notably elections – into a game played by individuals only, rather than by political organisations.¹⁴¹ The NRM initially promised 'fundamental change', and during the first few years, the government gradually improved security, facilitated the adoption of a more democratic constitution in 1995, and oversaw increased if uneven economic growth.¹⁴²

It is indubitable that the NRM used the 'no-party' democracy period to consolidate its strength and garner nationwide support and loyalty. When multiparty politics returned in 2005, the playing field was, therefore, already skewed in favour of the NRM. Other political parties struggled to establish their party structures and either regain old loyalties or acquire new ones. Hence, what is happening in Uganda today is the consolidation of the dominant party system. While an NRM victory in the 2011 general elections and in previous elections

may have come as no surprise, the opposition's diminishing show in these elections and the NRM's stranglehold on the political future raises crucial concerns as to the direction of the country's multiparty democracy.¹⁴³

Unsurprisingly, there have been increasing crossovers from other political parties to the NRM over the past years. The intensity of these crossovers heightens as the electoral heat increases. During the 2016 electoral season, for instance, 600 residents of Kaberamaido town defected to the NRM at a single rally¹⁴⁴ and in November 2015, up to 5,000 residents of Lango are believed to have crossed over from the UPC to the NRM.¹⁴⁵ Overall, the NRM continues to use incumbency advantages as a fulcrum for reaping political support and loyalty – a trend likely to continue since opposition to the party yields more disenfranchisement.

2.4 The entry and promises of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)

The FDC was founded in 2004 as a merger between opposition groups, including the Reform Agenda (RA), the Parliamentary Advocacy Forum (PAF) and the National Democratic Forum (NDF). The FDC's emergence on Uganda's political scene shook the incumbent NRM party and brought a ray of hope to millions of Ugandans who had been clamouring for change. In the 2006 elections, the FDC presidential candidate, Kiiza Besigye, won 37 per cent of the vote and FDC candidates won 37 seats in parliament out of a total

143Olum, Y. (2011). Multiparty politics in Uganda

144(2015). 600 opposition supporters cross to NRM. *New Vision* newspaper.

145Kazibwe, K. (2015). 500 defect to NRM in Apac. *Chimreports.com* article

140Carbone, M. (2001). No-party democracy? Political organisation under movement democracy in Uganda, 1994-2000.

141 Ibid

142 Freedom House (2010)

of 284 directly elected seats.¹⁴⁶ For a two-year old political party, this was a clear victory. In the 2011 elections, Besigye got 26.01 per cent of the vote and FDC won 34 seats in parliament.¹⁴⁷

Amidst numerous crossovers from the FDC to the NRM, the party still remains robust and its internal leadership remains organised and intact, evidenced by the fairness of party elections and cooperation among leaders. Though the FDC's prospects for climbing up the rungs of politics in Uganda are still slim, the party still remains a leading competitor and rival to the incumbent NRM party.

3. Conceptual analysis of party identification and implications for Uganda

To illuminate the party identification conceptualisation, this section will present the Michigan school of thought and the subsequent response by the rational choice theorists. After that, we integrate political clientelism and rent-seeking arguments into the analysis. In all analytical frameworks, we succinctly present their relevance to Uganda's politics.

3.1 Party identification and psychological attachment

The path-breaking research of the Michigan school, the group of political scientists and social psychologists at the University of Michigan who organised the first survey-based analyses of the American electorate, brought party identification to prominence.¹⁴⁸ In their classic theory,

Campbell *et al.* (1960) postulate that party identification is an enduring sense of psychological attachment to a political party and it is bonded by affection or emotion. The family and social constructs similarly play an essential role in the transmission of party loyalties.¹⁴⁹ Generally, party identification functions as a perceptual screen colouring how partisans interpret, store and retrieve political information.¹⁵⁰

Converse (1969) formalised the argument, proposing a model with four elements: 1) a *learning* process, the basic increments in partisan loyalties shown by the individuals over their life cycles as a direct function of their continuing experience with the party system; 2) a *resistance* phenomenon, representing the declining ease of learning as a function of the absolute age at which the individuals commence their experience within the system; 3) a *transmission* process, capturing whatever changes may surround the transfer of partisan feeling from one generation to the next; and 4) a *forgetting* process, handling the rate of decay in the retention of partisan loyalties subsequent to any suspension of the democratic process eliminating the mass relevance of traditional parties.¹⁵¹ The most important elements are the learning and transmission processes.¹⁵² As an example, in countries with established histories of democratic elections, age and electoral experience go together; where elections are new, age is not a surrogate for exposure to elections.

149 Harrop and Miller 1987.

150 Dancey & Goren (2010). Party identification, issue attitudes, and the dynamics of political debate. *American Journal of Political Science*.

151 See Converse (1996) in A.S. Zuckerman* and M. Brynin (2001), *A decision heuristic for party identification: new British and German data and a new understanding for a classic concept*.

152 Ibid.

146 African Elections Database (2009). Elections in Uganda. <<http://africanelections.tripod.com/ug>>

147 Ibid.

148 Zuckerman, A.S. * and Malcolm, B. (2001). A decision heuristic for party identification: New British and German data and a new understanding for a classic concept.

Also, 'there is evidence of a kind of "settling down" or habituation to a competitive party system, which occurs at a mass level as a secular trend over time.' In this perspective, party identification is a persistent loyalty to a political party.

Applied to the Ugandan party identification context, this theory provides a relevant but inadequate analysis. It can be assumed that the theory provides a more explicit framework for understanding party identification shortly before and immediately after independence in 1962. When the DP was founded in 1954 and became Uganda's first political party, thousands of Ugandans pledged allegiance and loyalty to the party. More particularly, the Baganda and Catholics had a stronger psychological attachment to the party since the party founding members originated from such social backgrounds. In fact, the attachment was so strong that elders in the family started inculcating party doctrines from birth. A classic example is given by a DP elder who recalls that those days 'Catholic parents would get a DP membership card for their children immediately after baptising them. That was intended to mean that the child grows knowing that his/her political party is the Democratic Party.'¹⁵³ This supports the theory that partisan attachments are products of early life socialisation experiences which, once acquired, tend to strengthen over time as a result of attitudinal and behavioural reinforcement processes.¹⁵⁴

It is also argued that the UPC's existence is partly attributed to psychological attachment. When it was founded, a wide majority of the 1960s generation joined the UPC wagon. Many, especially in

the Lango sub-region, continued to be loyal to the party even during the impossible years of Idi Amin and the no-party era of President Museveni. In the Lango sub-region, the psychological attachment to the UPC is so strong that it even attracts sympathy. It is, for instance, alleged that Jimmy Akena, the current UPC president and MP of Lira Municipality, is politically successful partly as a result of sympathy votes from the Lango people who had a psychological attachment to Obote (Akena's father) as their own son.¹⁵⁵

A brief analytical outlook, therefore, reveals the existence of a very thick line between ethnicity and psychological attachment to political parties. The fact that ethnic identities become systematically more important to people at the time competitive elections are being held suggests that ethnicity plays a role in the struggle for political power.¹⁵⁶ This is because politicians find it advantageous to 'play the ethnic card' as a means of mobilising supporters to acquire or retain political power.¹⁵⁷ The voters and partisans also 'dance to the ethnic tune' because they see it as an opportunity to attract rents and other favours from their 'own'. The Kakwa and Lugbara in West Nile, for instance, offered overwhelming support to the dictatorial regime of Idi Amin because of the promises of favours from state house. Indeed, citizens sometimes offer political loyalty based on the belief that jobs, favours, and public goods will be channelled disproportionately to co-ethnics of the person who is in a position to allocate them.¹⁵⁸

155 Ongeng, D. & Amoru, P. (2010). Akena to 'be his own man' in Lira. *Daily Monitor* newspaper article, Friday, 2 July 2010.

156 Elischer, S. (2014). *Political parties in Africa: Ethnicity and party formation*

157 Ibid.

158 Van de Walle (2007).

153 Kagwa Kavuma (2014). 60 years of the Democratic Party. *Independent Magazine*

154 Campbell *et al.* 1960.

3.2 Party identification as a rational political choice

According to this school of thought, party loyalty comes as a result of informed thought and a reasoned decision-making process that influences choice. This means that party identification is a choice to prefer one party selected from a set of alternative political parties.¹⁵⁹ To be able to make a more reasoned decision, citizens monitor party promises and past performances over time, and encapsulate their observations by being loyal to that party.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, citizens also consider the likely prospective benefits of identifying with a particular party during the decision-making process.¹⁶¹

The rational choice theory offers a comprehensive set of alternatives to partisan identification. Like the Michigan school theorists, rational choice theorists also expect a relatively stable partisan attachment since the citizens' decisions were arrived at after a series of reasoned decision-making processes. However, this does not mean absolute loyalty and unquestioned allegiance. In fact, when individuals alter their views for the benefit of the relationship between their policy preferences and the political parties, they change their partisan preferences.¹⁶² Therefore, when a political party seeks to maintain expectations and sticks to and/or improves the policies that attracted citizens to the party, their loyalty and identification stabilise, and vice versa.

Making the correct rational choice is thus enabled by the ability to

159 Zuckerman, A.S. * & Brynin, M. (2001). *A decision heuristic for party identification: New British and German data and a new understanding for a classic concept.*

160 Fiorina (1981).

161 Achen (1992).

162 Fiorina (1984).

understand and know the 'issues' of all alternative parties. When citizens know how the parties differ on an issue but do not consider the matter to be personally important, they modify their issue stance to conform to their party.¹⁶³ However, when citizens are aware of party differences and view the issue as personally important, they simultaneously update their party ties and policy preferences.¹⁶⁴

A more recent framework by Dancy and Goren (2010)¹⁶⁵ augments the rational choice theory by suggesting that media coverage of elite political debates and campaigns function as the key situational cue. Such cues are present when political debate among partisan elites on some issue becomes subject to close scrutiny by the news media.¹⁶⁶ When partisan leaders vigorously debate some matter, such as a proposed policy change, the appropriate response to a domestic or foreign policy crisis, a salient Supreme Court decision, or some other relevant controversy, news organisations take notice and provide ongoing coverage.¹⁶⁷ The relevance of this theory is that making an informed decision is operationalised by access to relevant information and that the media plays an instrumental role in this process.

Just like the Michigan school conceptualisation, the rational choice theory is inadequate to explain party identification dynamics in Uganda. This is attributed to a number of factors such as illiteracy, poor infrastructures and low access to timely and relevant information. At the advent of multiparty politics in Uganda in the 1950s and 1960s, access to timely and relevant information was almost impossible

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.

165 Dancy & Goren (2010). Party identification, issue attitudes, and the dynamics of political debate. *American Journal of Political Science*

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid.

to a vast majority of the country's population. Apart from postal and word-of-mouth mediums, other communication channels did not exist. This meant that making decisions depended on distorted and untimely information from the few political elites of that time. As a result, the reasoned decision-making process was ultimately affected, limiting the rational choice. One could, of course, argue that access to information in the 21st century has considerably improved with the advent of internet and mobile phones. However, a huge proportion of the population in rural Africa are still out of sync with the tech word.

Similarly, in a society with high levels of ignorance and low levels of formal education, the rational choice process is affected because of citizens' inability to read, write, comprehend, internalise and disseminate complex party policies. As a result, the majority of citizens become followers of the educated local political elites and their parties. They do this in the belief that the elites will perhaps offer back favours in the form of jobs and community projects, and not as a result of objective decisions. According to the cognitive mobilisation theory conceived by Dalton (1984) and later developed by Berglund *et al.* 2005, ignorance of the citizenry is actually good for party politics because they cannot be politically engaged without political party support. However, with high cognitive ability, citizens possess the skills and resources necessary to become politically engaged with little dependence on external cues.¹⁶⁸ This, therefore, posits a fundamental question: What is the future of partisan identification in the face of citizens' increasing cognitive mobilisation?

168 Berglund, F., Holmberg, S., Schmitt, H., & Thomassen, J. (2005). *Party identification and party choice* (pp. 106-24). na.

3.3 Party identification as a growth and survival strategy

According to Marcus, Neumann and Mackuen (2000), partisan identification is a habit or a standing decision which responds to economic worries. This in part is a continuation of the rational choice theory which contends that individuals/partisans will align themselves to political parties which offer them the best prospective benefits. Indeed, political agents/elites oftentimes do not pay loyalty to parties because of deep ideological orientation but rather because they give them more and better access to economic opportunities. According to this view, political elites and business leaders offer support to a political party (mostly the ruling party and/or those with the potential to acquire political power) because they expect to secure lucrative business deals and other privileges from the party.¹⁶⁹ Harvard scholar, Dani Rodrik (2010), for instance, provides an explicit and detailed account of how companies and elites in the Asian Tigers closely worked with political elites and ruling parties in a reciprocal relationship to produce the economic miracles.¹⁷⁰

This conceptualisation is buttressed by Mushtaq Khan's (2005) political settlement theory which criticises the conventional wisdom's excessive focus on the damaging effects of clientelism and rent-seeking. Political settlements are the expression of a common understanding, usually forged between elites, about how power is organised and exercised. They include formal institutions for managing political and economic relations, such as electoral processes, peace agreements, parliaments, constitutions and

169 Kelsall, T. (2012). Neo-Patrimonialism, Rent-Seeking and Development: Going with the Grain?. *New Political Economy*, 17(5), 677-682.

170 Rodrik, D. (2004). Industrial policy for the twenty-first century. Paper prepared for UNIDO (Cambridge, MA: Mimeo)

market regulations. But they also include informal, often unarticulated, agreements that underpin a political system, such as deals between elites on the division of spoils.¹⁷¹ Political settlements involve ongoing 'two-level games' which are not only horizontal negotiations and deals between elites, but also vertical relations between elites or leaders and the followers whose support they may need.¹⁷²

An important characteristic of political settlements is political clientelism, which Kelsall (2012) argues is an inevitable feature of all developing countries, and rent-seeking, which exists wherever there are imperfect markets. Therefore, focus should not be so much on the prevalence of clientelism and rent-seeking, but rather, on whether they are geared towards the creation of productive rents, and the capture of unproductive rents. In the traditional sense of the word, clientelism is a way of describing the pattern of unequal, hierarchical exchange characteristic of feudal society, in which patrons and clients were tied to durable relationships by a powerful sense of obligation and duty.

This 'old clientelism' has now been replaced by organised political parties with relatively bureaucratised structures with patrons.¹⁷³ Clients, enjoying higher living standards and less instinctively deferential, demand more immediate material benefits in exchange for their votes. In this new, 'mass party' clientelism, patrons have to 'buy' votes by distributing concrete excludable benefits and favours to individual voters or groups

of voters.¹⁷⁴ This was termed as a 'vote of exchange'¹⁷⁵ in the Italian context. Its relevance lies in the fact that, in Africa, the citizenry are quite often swayed to pay loyalty to a political party because of the handouts offered by the patron rather than because of programmatic public goods. Citizens are, therefore, often on a continuous 'shopping spree' for parties that offer the best deal, and may even switch parties if the flow of benefits dries up. This form of loyalty and party identification, Kelsall (2010) argues, introduces extremely strong incentives to focus on short-term distributive politics rather than longer-term economic accumulation.

This theory offers an important analytical perspective to contextualise the party identification paradox in Uganda. A classic example is the sudden payment of loyalty and membership subscription to the NRM party by the people of the Lango sub-region who have traditionally been resistant to the party's agendas. Until recently, the Lango sub-region was first and foremost a UPC stronghold and then later an FDC source of votes. This was partly due to psychological attachments since the founder of the UPC had come from Lango and due to the fact that the sub-region and its people were the biggest beneficiaries of the Obote I and II governments. On both occasions when the party lost power (as already explained above) it was weakened and rents stopped flowing to both elites and the citizens. Fewer UPC and Lango political elites crossed over to the ruling NRM, with the majority still continuing to identify with the UPC. As a result, NRM candidates, including the president, scored lowest in most elections. The flop of the NRM in the 2006 general elections offers an

171 DFID (2010). Building peaceful states and societies. *A DFID practice paper*, p. 22. London: DFID.

172 Ibid.

173 Hopkin, J. (2006, August). Conceptualizing political clientelism: Political exchange and democratic theory. In *APSA annual meeting, Philadelphia* (Vol. 31, pp. 46-18).

174 Ibid.

175 Parisi & Pasquino 1979.

excellent example. In that election, President Museveni got only 7 per cent of the votes and his contender, Kiiza Besigye from the FDC party, garnered a mammoth 85 per cent of the votes in the Lango sub-region.¹⁷⁶

After this stark realisation, the NRM embarked on a massive 'Lango appeasement programme' targeting both the elites and the ordinary citizens. To the elites, political favours in the form of jobs and contracts were offered, while for the ordinary citizens, community projects were initiated. This paid off when in the 2011 presidential elections the NRM attained a landslide victory in the region to the disadvantage of the UPC and even the FDC. The massive crossovers from the UPC to the NRM since the 2011 elections are thus unsurprising. In fact, as the rent flow increases, more crossovers are expected. In an interesting twist, Jimmy Akena openly professed support for President Yoweri Museveni in a November 2015 campaign rally in Lira town. This did not come as a surprise as Otunnu had earlier on accused Akena of receiving bribes from Museveni,¹⁷⁷ and Museveni had initially openly financed Akena's second marriage.¹⁷⁸

4. Conclusion

To the extent that party identification remains a central theme in understanding political dynamics globally, it is more important in Africa where multiparty politics is still at an embryonic stage. This paper has provided a comprehensive historical and analytical framework for the elusive concept of party identification in Uganda by looking at the experiences of four major political parties in the country, i.e.

the UPC, DP, NRM and FDC. Since the inception of party politics in 1954, when Uganda's first political party was founded, party identification has become more precarious. This precariousness was evident in the 1961 elections where UPU and the UNC merged to birth UPC. The UPC emerged as a strong political party and many DP partisans crossed over to the party. After the overthrow of Amin's dictatorship, party crossovers still remain a major characteristic of Uganda's politics. It is, in fact, argued that it has intensified with the return of multiparty politics in 2005.

Using the conceptualisations of the Michigan school and the rational choice theorists, the paper has shown that even if psychological attachment and rational choices do affect partisan identification, it still fails to capture a fundamental factor: why people pay allegiance to political parties – i.e. search for economic opportunities. From this perspective, partisans are always in a continuous search for what makes their lives better. If they arrive at that point, their loyalty increases and the reverse is true if their interests are not met. It is also important to note that explicit findings on party identification in Uganda keep changing over time and that this is influenced by educational attainment and increase in knowledge and cognitive ability. This was discovered after Dalton's (1981) cognitive mobilisation conceptualisation that the more educated and cognitive an individual is, the less partisan they be since they can still engage in political processes without necessarily being partisan.

All in all, party identification in Uganda is poised to remain more precarious as political agents shop for parties which offer the best

¹⁷⁶ IPOD (2010). *Uganda. Africa Elections Data Base.*

¹⁷⁷ See More defections to NRM expected, *The Observer* newspaper, 23 November 2015.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

incentives. After all, political parties today are not what they once were.¹⁷⁹

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179 Schmitter, P. (2001). Parties are not what they once were. *Political parties and democracy*, 67-89.

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Youth Participation in Political Processes in Uganda: Exploring Opportunities and Constraints

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Abstract

This paper problematises the paradox of ineffective youth participation in Uganda despite their demographic electoral dominance. The paper argues that ineffective youth participation in political and development processes results from high levels of underemployment, which has fuelled youth poverty and subsequently entrenched clientelistic political systems. The discussion in this paper reinforces the salience of the old debate that links economic democracy to political democracy. Key findings in this paper point to the need to place the unemployment problem at the centre of civil society future advocacy work.

1. Introduction

The cornerstone of democratic governance is inclusive participation in political processes.¹⁸⁰ It determines the dynamics of the structure and distribution of political power and the consequent nature of political and economic institutions that shape the political and economic trajectory of the society. Thus participation can take many forms, ranging from participating in elections through voting or vying for leadership positions. Under party politics, it can be seen in terms of attending public meetings, drafting policies and effectively mobilising and advocating their implementation, attending campaigns, campaigning for preferred candidates etc.

Specific conditions must exist to incentivise inclusive participation in political processes. Some authors¹⁸¹ have argued that constitutional instruments must exist to structure political power

in a depersonalised way that legally create spaces for participation. Drawing on this argument, other analysts have thus suggested that authoritarian regimes in which no practical constraints exist on the exercise of political power often undermines the ability of citizens to engage in the politics of allocating authority to guide the allocation of scarce resources in society.¹⁸²

But having institutional instruments is not enough. Organisations – whether political, civic or otherwise – must emerge to actualise the constitutional instruments for participation, as well as institutionalise the political spaces and provide the platform for citizens to organise around specific interests, as well as use organisational networks to champion their interests in the legally provided forums such as parliament and the judiciary. This kind of political system is designed to ensure that the majority group at any particular time will always shape the institutional arrangement to serve their interests; and it is inherently flexible to ensure that no single majority group dominates politics over a long period of time.¹⁸³

Analysis of Uganda's fledging multiparty democratic process points to the existence of the institutional and organisational structures that foster the participation of all groups within the population. The constitution, for instance, grants the right to all political groups to compete for the acquisition of

180Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2005). *Economic origins of dictatorship and democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

181Przeworski, A., & Maravall, J. M. (2003). *Democracy and the rule of law* (Vol. 5). Cambridge University Press.

182Przeworski, A. (2000). *Democracy and development: Political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950-1990* (Vol. 3). Cambridge University Press.

183Katusiimeh, M. W. (2004). Civil society organisations and democratic consolidation in Uganda. *African Journal of International Affairs*, 7(1-2).

political power.¹⁸⁴ Moreover, in terms of representation, the constitution is sensitive to the inclusion of potentially marginalised groups such as persons with disabilities, women and the youth and indeed provides for their representation by gazetting a certain number of seats in parliament for these groups.¹⁸⁵

Therefore, in terms of the foundational prerequisites for competitive politics in a fair and transparent manner, Uganda appears to have them in place. And yet, youth participation has not translated into policy influence to respond to youth issues such as un- and underemployment despite the fact that nearly 60 per cent of Uganda's total electoral vote¹⁸⁶ comprises the youth. A naïve analysis of events might suggest that youth participation is underlined mainly by the profusion of many youth groups such as 'No More Campaign', 'Jobless Brotherhood', 'Poor Youth', to mention but only a few, that have been formed in the wake of the impending 2016 general elections. More often than not, however, youth demographic dominance is used to champion the interests of particular dominant elites with no or little response to youth issues.¹⁸⁷

This paper attempts to examine why youth representation in Uganda's political processes remains less influential in terms of policy response despite the existence of institutional and organisational instruments that have made spaces available

for participation as well as the youth demographic electoral dominance that you would expect the youth to use to shape policies and institutions in a way that responds to their interests.

The central argument of the paper is that youth organisations lack the required capacity to organise effectively; they are predominantly urban-biased with weak or no penetration at the grass roots. As a result, the civic culture in Uganda has remained significantly weak, characterised by low awareness of citizens' rights, particularly about the existence of spaces for championing their interests, and weak human resource capacity within youth organisations – which is explained by several factors, including an over-the-years weakened education system that has suffered from the unintended effects of structural adjustment policies (SAPs). Particularly, the overall effects of SAPs on employment and poverty have further compounded the attenuation of organisational capabilities within political and civic organisations, fuelling clientelism and organisational capture, and thus weakening the ability of different groups to organise effectively so that they are able to elect leaders and subsequently hold them accountable.

The rest of the paper is organised as follows. We begin by revisiting the theoretical underpinnings of inclusive and progressive competitive political processes. Then we trace the historical and contemporary understanding of Uganda's democratic processes, highlighting the opportunities and constraints for participation. This section also problematises the paradox of less-influential youth engagement in Uganda's political and governance processes despite their demographic dominance. The last section concludes with a discussion of policy suggestions for revitalising youth participation in Uganda's political processes with a view to deepening democratic practice.

184 DGF-UYONET.(Forthcoming). 'Evaluation of 2013-2017 Development Strategy.

185 The constitutional court however recently ruled that all youth, workers, and the military are in parliament illegally and should thus be scrapped. (Source: <http://www.parliament.go.ug/new/index.php/about-parliament/parliamentary-news/707-court-did-not-kick-out-army-youth-workers-mps-from-parliament>)

186 Electoral Commission estimates Uganda's total electoral vote at 13.5 million.

187 DGF-UYONET.(Forthcoming). 'Evaluation of 2013-2017 Development Strategy.

2. Theoretical construct for inclusive and progressive democratic practice

Theoretical literature suggests that inclusive democratic practice is characterised by the existence of institutional provisions that permit different groups of people in society to freely organise around a set of interests and be able to pursue them unencumbered.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, interests must be defined and distinguished as the basis for mobilisation to acquire political power. Some authors, such as Mary Douglas, have suggested that this is not, however, enough. Certain dispositions or values of democratic practice must have taken root in a society. For example, those who lose in competitive political processes must non-violently accept loss and those who win and thus acquire political power must serve everyone, including those who did not vote for them.¹⁸⁹

Thus, although institutions ensure that legal provisions exist to create spaces for participation, what truly catalyses participation is the nature of organisations, particularly the internal relationships among members within these organisations, their formal and informal rules as well as the societal-cultural dispositions, whether they support or hinder democratic practice.

Organisations exist, first, to actualise the institutions that create legal spaces for political participation,¹⁹⁰ and second, as platforms for developing the capacity to organise, mobilise and advocate particular policies (see Figure 1). Therefore, the interests around which organisations form are crucial in this case; also crucial are the kinds of rules that are designed to develop the

structure for managing organisational activities and functions as well as to manage relationships among members within these organisations. This determines the nature and quality of internal accountability within the organisation,¹⁹¹ the organisational capacity for growth and the ability to develop networks with other organisations in order to advance mutual cooperation around a set of interests.

Speaking in practical terms, political parties exist to distinguish the interests of different groups of people in society and to provide the platform for organising and mobilising to acquire political power in order to advance those interests.¹⁹² This process depends on a strong civil society characterised by an independent media to facilitate the flow of information about politicians' and citizens' interests to effectively foster an unencumbered citizen choice of political allegiance as well as cultivating the civil capital within society in order to engender an informed and politically conscious society.¹⁹³ The linkages between different groups within the civic and political spectrum will often determine the effectiveness and robustness of political participation and subsequently the evolution of the country's institutional process.

In the next section, we shall analyse the historical process of Uganda's nascent democratic political process to illustrate this more clearly.

191 Bovens, M. (1998). *The quest for responsibility: Accountability and citizenship in complex organisations*. Cambridge University Press.

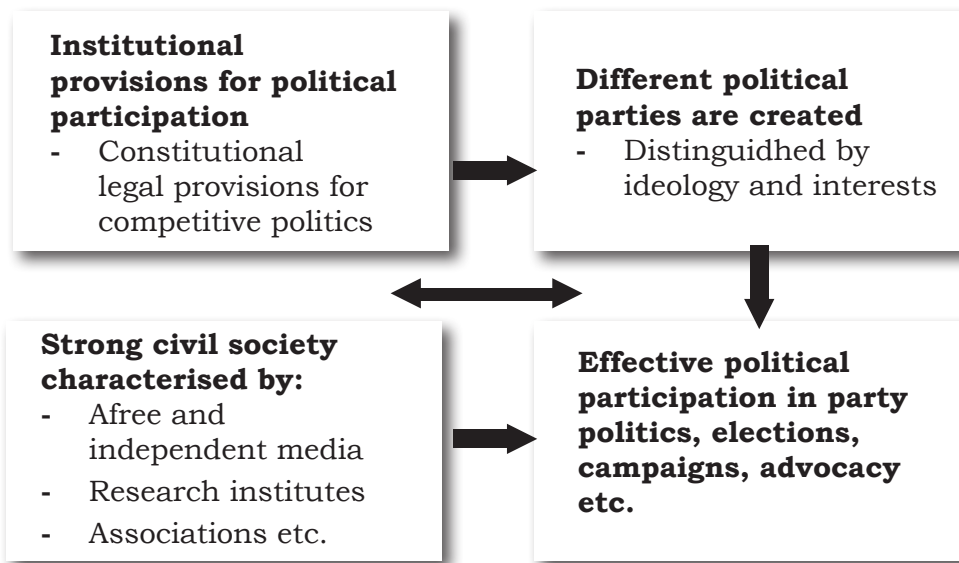
192 Morales, L. (2009). *Joining political organisations: Institutions, mobilisation and participation in western democracies*. ECPR Press.

193 Bueno de Mesquita, B., & Downs, G. W. (2005). In their paper, *Development and democracy*. *Foreign Aff.*, 84, 77, they call this 'strategic coordination activities.'

188 Przeworski, A. (2000). *Democracy and development: Political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950-1990 (Vol. 3)*. Cambridge University Press.

189 Douglas, M. (1986). *How institutions think*. Syracuse University Press.

190 North, D. C., Wallis, J. J., & Weingast, B. R. (2009). *Violence and social orders: A conceptual framework for interpreting recorded human history*. Cambridge University Press.

Figure 1: Conceptualising determinants of political participation**Author's conceptualisation****3. Tracing the evolution of Uganda's political process: Constraints and opportunities for youth participation**

In 1986, after the end of the civil war, Uganda was ruled by a military junta under President Museveni, the leader of the National Resistance Army (NRA), a rebel movement that had been formed in protest against the alleged rigged 1980 elections that helped to return President Milton Obote to power. Uganda was ruled by an undemocratically elected president from 1986 until 1996, when the country held its first democratic elections. One year prior to the 1996 general elections, the constituent assembly that had been formed in the 1990 had delivered the first consultative people's constitution that provided the space for democratic political participation.

However, the constitution did not provide for multiparty democracy and arguments had been made that proceeding in this direction would potentially ethnicise Uganda's political processes and thus rekindle the sectarian tendencies that had characterised the previous regimes.

Consolidating political stability, they further argued, was contingent on effectively neutralising sectarian tendencies and thus multiparty political processes were inimical to Uganda's political stability, at least at the time.¹⁹⁴ However, complaints about the dictatorial tendencies of some leaders within the one-party state strengthened demands for the multiparty democratic political process. The pressure had built up to the point where it had triggered the first exit of dissenting politicians from the movement system under the Reform Agenda that were led by presidential aspirant, Dr Kiiza Besigye, in the run-up to the 2001 general elections.

Although President Museveni went on to win the presidential election, the clamour for the multiparty political process did not relent. This, combined with donor pressure, eventually compelled the incumbent government to accept institutional reform that ushered in the multiparty

194 Museveni, Y. K. (1997). *Sowing the mustard seed: The struggle for freedom and democracy in Uganda* (Vol. 195). E. Kanyogonya, & K. Shillington (Eds.). London: Macmillan.

political dispensation and, in 2006, Uganda held its first ever multiparty general elections since 1980. Under the multiparty democratic framework, Uganda has so far held only two general elections, and it is expected that the third will be held less than three months from now.

So an obvious question is: How do Uganda's historical political system and its dynamics explain the current dynamics to youth political participation? As earlier mentioned, effective political organisation is underpinned by the distinction of political ideology, particularly party ideology, which, nonetheless, must be consistent with the national ideology. From 1986 up until 2004, there was only one party ideology, i.e. the movement system ideology rationalised around the famous ten-point programme. Although this effectively provided the basis for a grass-roots movement within the movement system, it significantly stymied providing for diverse views on Uganda's governance and development processes, subsequently weakening the capacity for pluralistic participation. In fact the alternative policy propositions that emerged from the rank of dissenting politicians within the movement system was the clamour for opening up the spaces for divergent political views, voices that had remained obstructed for nearly a decade from 1996. During the period of one-party rule, any vestiges of civil society were forcefully and inevitably compelled to serve partisan interests, limiting the diversity of ideas and their capacity for growth.

Economically, this era was profoundly characterised by the implementation of the SAPs whose unintended effects have been eloquently argued by Mkandawire and Soludo (1999) in their classic

text, *Our Continent, Our Future*.¹⁹⁵ SAPs destroyed the existing social protection systems by conspicuously cutting funding to the education and health sectors. This contributed to the diminishing of human capital development and subsequently the weakening of the ability of political and civic organisations to build capacity for democratic practice.

In fact, financial liberalisation and the privatisation of the economy undid the development of local capitalism and fuelled the intrusion of foreign firms as the main producers within the economy. The interest of such firms in the progression of local politics is limited to protection of their interests and less on the cultivation of democratic practice. This significantly weakened the strong and organic linkage between economic and political democracy. In fact, the sheer absence of an emerging civil society at the advent of the multiparty political framework compelled donors to increase funding in this sector. Although this has contributed to the development of civil society in Uganda characterised by increased emergence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civic associations and media organisations doing advocacy, the misaligned incentives that characterise donor aid and recipient organisations have ensured the creation of a civil society, to paraphrase Mkandawire, that is 'socially rootless'. Such a civil society mainly responds to donor interests rather than citizen interests.¹⁹⁶

Unexamined financial liberalisation and privatisation of the economy have inhibited the capacity of employment-led economic growth,

¹⁹⁵ See Mkandawire, P. T., & Soludo, C. C. (1999). *Our continent, our future: African perspectives on structural adjustment*. Idrc.

¹⁹⁶ Mkandawire, T. (2010). Aid, accountability, and democracy in Africa. *Social Research*, 1149-1182.

limiting the ability of Uganda's economy to absorb its rapidly increasing labour force estimated at 700,000 new entrants each year.¹⁹⁷ This has created a state of jobless growth, resulting in increased un- and underemployment, stagnated poverty reduction and increased economic vulnerability.¹⁹⁸ The political consequences of this state of economic affairs have manifested most in increased clientelism and patronage politics as survival becomes most critical. This has increased corruption and institutional decay, and impeded institutional transition in Uganda as the allocation of power is mainly driven by 'who has the deepest pockets'. Although political processes maintain a democratic face value, its political commercialisation has significantly undermined democratic practice and specifically the ability of young men and women to effectively take advantage of the existing spaces for participation to shape the institutional structure of Uganda to respond to their interests.

4. Conclusion

The above analysis has highlighted how Uganda's past political and economic processes have come to shape the current predicament of ineffective youth participation in the governance and development processes. Specifically, the analysis has shown that the quasi-authoritarian rule, particularly between 1986 and 2004, prior to opening up the space for multiparty political rule, significantly diminished the opportunities for building capacity for pluralistic political participation. Many opposition parties or prospective opposition politicians were prevented from organising and mobilising along a set of interests which gave

the incumbent party advantage to dominate politics in the latter years to the detriment of Uganda's institutional transition.

In addition, the implementation of SAPs, although initially intended to expand the capacity for economic participation which, in the long run, was expected to catalyse political participation¹⁹⁹ by creating an accountability relationship between the capitalist and political classes, because Uganda's initial conditions were ignored, it has instead reversed the process of democratic accountability. It has significantly destroyed social protection systems thus weakening the development of human capital, necessary for strengthening organisational capacity. Furthermore, financial liberalisation and privatisation has weakened the capacity of Uganda's economy to guarantee and sustain employment growth, leading to the stagnation of poverty reduction, and fuelling un- and underemployment, particularly youth unemployment. This has fuelled patron-client-based politics, resulting in increased corruption and institutional stagnation, all of which are obstacles to democratisation.

A policy response aimed at arresting this democracy-constraining terrain demands addressing the structural constraints on youth participation in the governance and development processes. Although it may seem unclear how exactly to engineer this change, particularly because it depends on institutional reform which, in turn, depends on participation, public discussion on a set of easily relatable issues might be the best way to initiate a reawakening

197 Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. (2014). 'Uganda's Unemployment Challenge'.

198 See Uganda's 2014 Poverty Status Report.

199 Following Martin Lipset's argument on the linkage between economic growth and democracy. See Lipset, S. M. (1959). Some social requisites of democracy: Economic development and political legitimacy. *American Political Science Review*, 53(01), 69-105, for details.

of the civil consciousness of the young people who at the moment seem to be the main targets of clientelism and political patronage, but who at the same time hold the key to potentially altering Uganda's governance trajectory. Unless some ways can be devised to usher in institutional reform, addressing the structural constraints on inclusive and sustainable democratic practice in Uganda might appear all too improbable but not insurmountable.

Strategies for Effective Youth Engagement in Uganda's Democratic System

Nele Krüger

Abstract

This report provides a comprehensive synthesis of the views, ideas and opinions that emerged from countrywide discussions on the constraints and opportunities for meaningful youth engagement in Uganda's democratic processes. The University Forum on Governance and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung organised a series of youth debates to examine the central question of why youth participation in Uganda's political system still remains ineffective despite the existence of legal provisions and representation structures for youth participation. The report suggests a multi-level approach for overcoming the challenges young people face as a way of strengthening youth engagement in democratic governance.

1. Introduction

The University Forum on Governance (UNIFOG) and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) hosted a series of regional youth debates in Uganda to explore the constraints and suggest solutions to the challenges relating to meaningful youth participation in political decision-making processes. The debates took place in all four regions of Uganda, starting with the Eastern Region on 5 October at Civil Service College in Jinja, followed by the Central Region on 15 October at Makerere University in Kampala. This was followed by the debate on 28 October in the Northern Region, held at Gulu University and the final one on 13 November in the Western Region, which took place at Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

Prior to conducting of the regional debates, a training workshop had been held with a view to equip young

leaders with the relevant skills of debating and public speaking. Twenty-three youth and student leaders took part in the three-day training which strengthened their abilities in analysing, presenting and argumentation. Trainees from this programme were invited to join panel discussions in the regions where they were able to give their views on youth political engagement in Uganda. The debate series focused on the causes, challenges and opportunities for youth participation in Uganda. This report thus analyses the discussions and tries to answer the deep-seated and fundamental questions regarding the low impact of youth participation in Uganda's political processes.

2. Why youth?

Whereas almost half of Uganda's registered voters are between the ages 18 and 30, effective and constructive participation of youth in the political process remains low. Uganda's affirmative action policy presents the broad category of youth as a marginalised group. Since the youth form a significant portion of the country's population, it seems contradictory to define the youth as a marginalised group. Is there any correlation between youth marginalisation and political participation? In a country like Uganda with a rising youth population whose political participation is seemingly low and unconstructive, this question begs a critical synthesis.

Ugandan youth are face several challenges, such as poverty, unemployment, a poor education system and inadequate access to health care. While official sources rate the youth unemployment rate at

7.7 per cent,²⁰⁰ experts estimate that the percentage of unemployed youth is much higher. According to other sources, the youth unemployment rate is estimated to be much higher owing to inefficient reporting systems. It is estimated that almost 60 per cent of the Ugandan workforce is engaged in the informal sector, which excludes them from security mechanisms like health insurance or pension funds. Most young people are engaged in subsistence agriculture and have no prospects of a decent paid job. Moreover, the proportion of the working poor in Uganda is still high. Missing job opportunities and an education system which does not provide young people with relevant work-related skills relegate a big proportion of the youth to the unproductive sectors of the economy. The expected doubling of the workforce size in the next 20 years will only exacerbate the situation.²⁰¹

For such challenges to be addressed, the youth need to be represented in the democratic process to formulate and implement effective policies and overcome the above-mentioned problems. Although youth structures, youth organisations and youth representation exist in parliament, they do not have a relevant impact on political parties, on the local councils and on the national political processes.

The next session presents a comprehensive narrative and synthesis of the youth and political participation processes in Uganda.

3. Format of the youth debates

The format of the debates was designed to ensure lively and constructive interaction between the

²⁰⁰ See Uganda Labour Market Profile 2014 by Ulandssekretariate.

²⁰¹ See Uganda's Employment Challenges by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

panel and the audience. Therefore, a moderated-led discussion divided in different phases was introduced. Besides topic-based panel discussions, the audience was frequently given the opportunity to respond to the arguments discussed on the panel.

The panel consisted of students and youth representatives who had been prepared in preceding training workshop or are engaged in civil society and youth leadership functions in different organisations. Participants were students and youth leaders from the four regions to give their views on the topic, exchange solutions and get motivated to take action. All in all, approximately 1,000 youth were engaged in the nationwide debating campaign.

4. Discussed topics

During the debates, different challenges that youth face participating in decision-making process were discussed. The panelists made input on topics like youth representation, youth unemployment, poverty and education, which were commented on and discussed by the audience. In the following section, the main problems affecting youth participation in Uganda's political process will be discussed in order to understand the current situation and to find the way forward.

4.1 Diversity of the youth

The discussions observed that Ugandan youth represent significant diversities to the extent that the connection between youth and their leaders is very weak. Typically, most youth representatives have a better financial background and will have attained a higher education level than the majority of youth in Uganda, which causes the problem of a lack of understanding of the needs of the youth. Even though some

participants promoted the idea of having a united youth movement, the realities on the ground do not make any such idea viable. Only 19.4 per cent of the youth of 20 to 30 years of age live in urban areas while most of the youth still live in rural areas.²⁰² Young people in Uganda grow up in different environments and cultures and attain different education levels. The interests of young women might differ from the interests of young men and an 18-year-old youth will probably have other ideas regarding the development of the country from a 30-year-old youth. Little attention has been paid to the diversity of youth in the public debates and yet it is a key factor of ineffective youth participation. Efforts to unite the youth have failed in the past and new approaches are needed to address the diversity.

4.2 Weak leadership

There are numerous allegations and facts related to youth political representatives being engaged in political malpractices. Some panellists blamed the youth representatives for misusing money and the youth representation structures for being ineffective. Representation structures exist but do not reach down to the grass roots and do not serve the interests of ordinary youth.

Others pointed out that the design of the representation structures for youth was not the main problem. The National Youth Council, for example, is elected from the grassroots and formed by representatives from the village level up to the national level. According to the participants, a bigger problem was that the NRM occupies the youth representation structures and opposition candidates had fewer chances to be elected. Moreover, youth still lack information on

elections, representation and political decision-making processes, which leads to a low turnout of youth on the polling day and a poor understanding of democratic principles.

4.3 Youth unemployment, underemployment and poverty

Participants also alluded to the interplay between politics and economics. This introduced the concept of economic democracy which underpins the essence of youth political participation in Uganda. Owing to limited gainful engagement of youth in productive economic activities, young people will always be attracted by financial incentives from political elites who use youth as a stepping stones to their political interests. The rationale of this thinking is that, unless youth become active economic actors, their voices and demands will always be taken for granted.

Some youth representatives see a political position as a job opportunity rather than a platform to represent the interests of young citizens and to influence political decision-making processes. Because of unemployment and poverty, a political position is oftentimes associated with a stable income in the first place, which leads to poor representation of young people.

Poverty always fuels bribery, which puts poor youth in a difficult situation. The participants noted that people who are suffering have no option but to sell their vote to the candidate who offers the most money or goods for daily consumption.

The relation between unemployment, poverty, bribery and corruption can be described as a vicious circle (see below). High unemployment and underemployment rates lead to poverty, which creates the conditions

²⁰² See Poverty Status Report 2014 by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

for bribery and corruption which then results in poor leadership that fails to effectively address the unemployment problem. As long as young people have limited chances to live a self-sustained life, they will always depend on the financial resources of the elites. Bribery is thus seen as a source of financial help for vulnerable youth and not as a source of poor leadership that does not provide any solutions to the unemployment problem.

4.4 Lack of funding

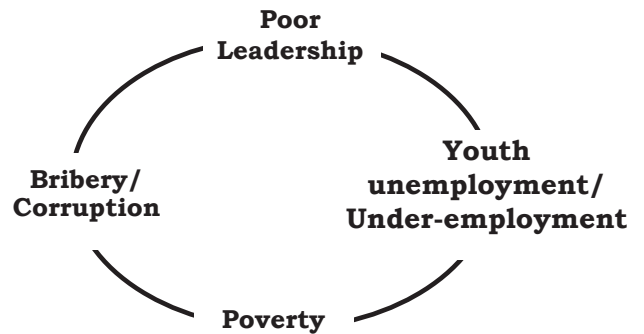
Since the majority of youth are not engaged in productive work, funds for youth organisations come mostly from foreign sources and can be easily controlled by the funder. Financial dependence also means depending on the interests of the funder that might differ from youth interests. Moreover, the youth do not feel very connected to their youth organisations when they do not have to contribute to them, which endangers their serious impact on the democratic system. Another significant issue which emerged during the debate series is the fact that there is an increase in the number of youth groups being formed, mostly during campaign periods to attract political rents, but which suddenly perish after the elections.

4.5 Gender inequality

Women are not equally represented among the youth. An increasing number of young women in Uganda are also excluded from actively participating in democratic and political processes. Poor civic education and little access to relevant political information as well as the dominant culture of social discrimination against women produce a male-dominated political environment. Although a legal framework allows equal participation by women and man, prejudice against

women on the pretext that they are not suited enough to hold political positions and low support for female candidates by the community make it very difficult for young women to stand for a political position.

Figure 1: Vicious circle of unemployment, poverty, bribery and poor leadership



Author's conceptualisation

4.6 Cultural mindset

Youth in the Ugandan society are still viewed as a group that needs guidance by elders. Young people are not trusted to have the capacity to fill and manage certain positions in politics, society or the economy. That leads to the exclusion of young people from effectively influencing decision-making processes and leading their fellow youth. High political positions are occupied by elders who are not willing to create space for the younger generation. A hierarchical structure where elders are viewed as a wise and infallible small group of people potentially makes it very difficult for a society to bring in alternative and fresh ways of thinking.

Some debaters partly attributed this problem to the education system, which they argue, is constructed around such hierarchical orders – a factor which inhibits youth's ability to be critical and generate new ideas.

5. *The way forward*

Most of the issues raised during the debating series is part and parcel of a broader challenge in the Ugandan political discourse. To address this challenge, a multi-pronged approach which requires the concerted effort of the various and relevant stakeholders is critical.

Most significantly, youth should accept that they are not a homogeneous group but rather a combined entity of individuals with different interests. A youth movement comprising all young people is thus only possible if youth are able to agree on basic demands and policies. Otherwise the diversity of youth should be much more recognised in public debates since it is almost impossible that half of the Ugandan population should have the same interests and ideas regarding the future of their country. In fact, this diversity should be harnessed since it presents an opportunity for shaping youth political participation landscape in Uganda.

There is also an urgent need to embrace social media as a tool for fast, cheap and easy mobilisation of youth. In fact, this is already a ripe opportunity since a significant portion of Ugandan urban youth are already networked on social media. This is evidenced by the increasing social media debates initiated by youth on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. It is, however, important to be cognizant of the fact that a majority of young people still remain outside the social media train. In fact, only 34.2 per cent of the population in Uganda has access to the internet and a smaller percentage uses social media on a regular basis.²⁰³ For those who use them, social media are still a helpful tool to communicate

and organise movements or other political activities.

In terms of addressing the leadership problem, one of the panelists, Ms Florence Acuma, coordinator of Apac District Youth Network (ADYN), provided a best practice model for how to strengthen youth organisations. ADYN provides the structure for strong youth organisations from the village level up to the district level and, therefore, ensures the representation of the grass roots at the district level. Open and inclusive platforms where youth have the opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss local challenges and formulate alternative approaches for their community are needed countrywide. That would not only lead to more political discussions and involvement but also contribute to holding youth leaders accountable due to a stronger engagement on both sides.

Young people are often not aware of the legal frameworks under which their leaders act and they might not know that cases of corrupt representatives can be taken to court. Going to court is the last option people have in a democracy and should be open to anyone who feels that governmental entities are not acting within the law. To raise awareness of the legal basis, civic education is the answer and should not only be conducted by civil society but should also start in schools.

Still, this does not resolve the problem of the frequent exclusion of youth representatives from the decision-making process at the district level and the inaudibility of youth voices. That problem can only be overcome when young people are engaged in the productive sector and gain bargaining power, and thus become economically empowered.

203 <http://www.ucc.co.ug/files/downloads/Q1-Market%20Report%202015.pdf>.

Therefore, new jobs in productive areas are needed. The panelists urged the government to identify promising economic sectors and provide the needed infrastructure as well as policies to create new jobs.

The economic empowerment of young people is a key issue in creating the conditions for imbuing young people with self-confidence and equipping them with bargaining power. Only when youth contribute massively to society through taxes and economic growth will they have the power to hold their leaders accountable and successfully demand that their interests be catered for by putting pressure on their leaders. This would lead to a mindset change since the dynamics of power between the old and the young generations would change. In this regard, youth would be more respected and trusted and, owing to that, be able to effectively engage in democratic governance.

However, the above does not answer the question about how young people can attain economic empowerment. As described earlier on, Uganda is lacking job opportunities. Some would urge the government to take action and identify promising sectors where new jobs are being created as well as provide a legal framework that attracts investors. But that is only one side of the coin and does not reflect the whole problem. East Africa is a big market with a lot of demand for various products, which creates opportunities for innovative entrepreneurs. Young people often lack the self-confidence and the financial background to realise their ideas and do not have the space to develop innovations. Access to loans needs to be much easier for young people and the education system has to be reformed so that it can provide students with more practical skills.

Preparing the ground for empowering young people should also be in the

interests of the government since the demographic trend shows that the workforce is going to grow and might affect the stability and peace of the country if most people do not have any prospects for finding a job and earning a stable income. Therefore, it is only for its own good that the government should make an effort to break the vicious circle of unemployment by implementing effective policies to solve the problem.

Demands should not be made only on the government but also on the youth themselves. Young entrepreneurs need more support from their fellow youth to support their business ideas, to promote their products and to invest in their businesses.

To ensure gender equality among youth representatives, participants suggested that pro-women policies and more civic education be fostered particularly at the grass roots. A look at the policies and laws which are in place clearly shows that there are plenty of laws existing to ensure equality between women and men. The main problem which needs to be addressed is the lack of implementation of these policies. Ensuring the implementation process only will not fully contribute to stronger engagement of young women in politics; there is also need for a mindset change, as mentioned above. Civic education for the grass roots and training for young women in political positions is the most effective tool when addressing gender inequality.

6. Conclusion

In the light of the plethora of challenges constraining active and constructive youth participation in political processes, there is still one bullet which might shoot down this predicament – job creation. This is because jobs bring decency and economic empowerment. In fact, the

availability of more jobs portends to reduce the use of youth as a pedestal for political elites to propagate their selfish political agenda. Only after the youth have gained economic power and are able to contribute to society will the cultural mindset change and young people be more respected and trusted in their community. Right now the political elites are only able to suppress youth representation structures because young people are less able to stand up against it. Thus economic empowerment of youth is the key to creating a society where power is not concentrated in the hands of a small group of elders but equally divided, which creates the conditions for meaningful youth engagement in democratic governance.

However, the experiences from the youth debate series clearly show that there is still need to discuss the challenges, exchanging possible solutions and raising awareness of the immense potential that young people have. Youth debates might not directly lead to the economic empowerment of youth but are the first step towards a broader understanding of the cause of poor political engagement of young people and possible solutions.



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